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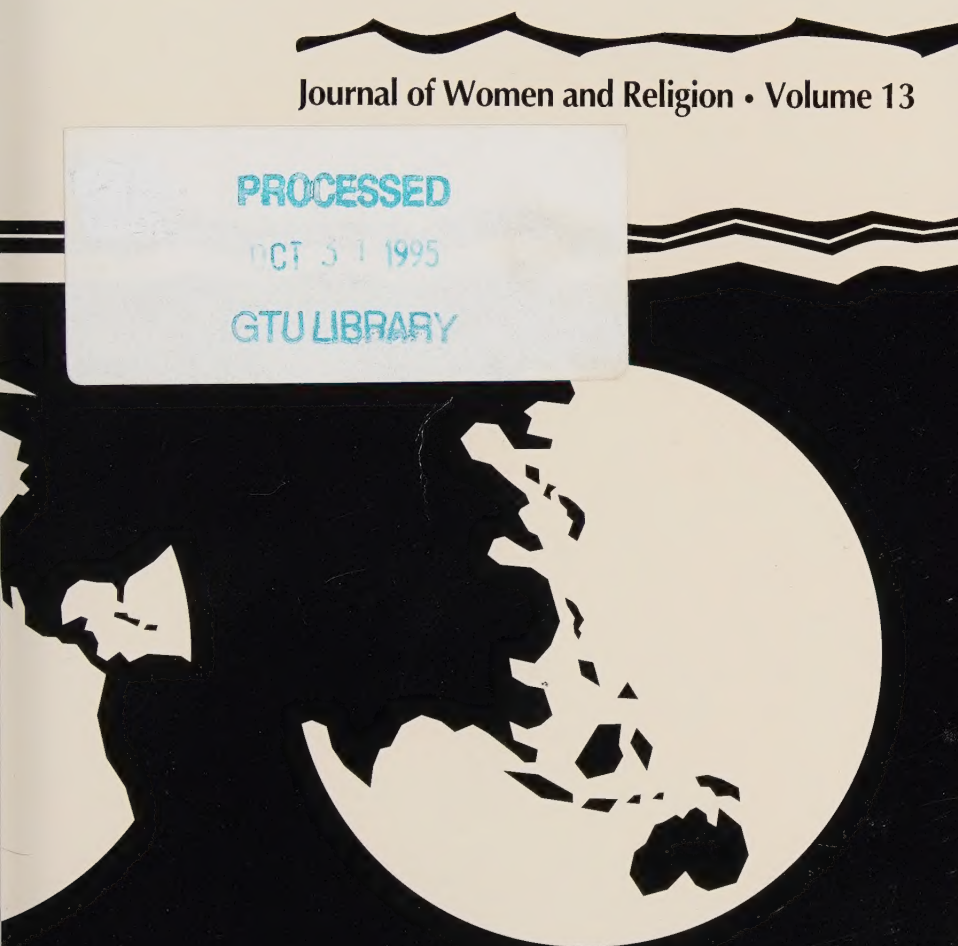
MAPPING A PAN-PACIFIC FEMINIST THEOLOGY

Journal of Women and Religion • Volume 13

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MAPPING A PAN-PACIFIC FEMINIST THEOLOGY



Journal of Women and Religion
Volume 13



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Foreward

by Kathryn Poethig

Can there be a Pan-Pacific feminist theology?

What does it mean for feminist theologians to map the Pacific? Join me in a cartographical detour before returning to the question. Early in my youth, I began to paper my rooms with maps taken liberally from back issues of *National Geographic*. After years of this practice, I noticed that maps of certain regions repeated themselves. Under scrutiny, I began to detect subtle revisionism — national names changed (Ceylon); nations once displayed in pink were now swallowed into the color of a neighboring giant; thin lines disappeared, once separating nations with the same last name (say, Vietnam). Confronted by this continuous cartographical upset, the bland declaration of geographic certainty lost its foothold. More skepticism followed: if such was the fluidity of political boundaries, what was the political subtext of the cartographers themselves? One need only compare indigenous maps in which that nation sits in the center of the map (the world); consider the genealogy of names of Asian nations (the Philippines after King Phillip of Spain); or note how regions must be remapped yearly (the former USSR). Even an amateur's foray into the history of cartography thrusts her into realpolitic.

The political geography of the Pacific offers one current case: Pacific Rim, Pacific Basin, Asia Pacific, Pan-Pacific are often used interchangeably. Each cluster is a question of power and membership. The Rim doesn't often include the Basin; it includes North America but rarely the Southern coast; Asia Pacific covers the Western Pacific. This division, like most of the legacies of colonialism, received its names and arrangements from Euro-America. Consider

the curious appellations, "Far East," and "Orient," both meant to indicate for Europeans those lands beyond the Levant. The "South Seas" were "discovered" by Balboa in 1513 ; "Pacific" came into being at the end of James Cook's expeditions in 1788.¹

"The modern formation of the Pacific" notes Arik Dirlik, "was dynamic in its transformative powers, persistent in its logic, and total in the sense that it affected all areas of life, from economic relations to culture (from missionaries to contemporary consumer culture)."² And certainly this legacy continues in its latest names. The "Pacific Rim" is a "baby whose putative parents are Japanese and American and whose midwife is Australian," charges Filipina feminist scholar Valera Quisumbing, who has countered that the Pacific Ocean has actually served as an "American Lake."³ Indeed, the concept of a Pacific Rim first emerged in relation to Japan and became a popular construct in the 1970's, organized around the "miracle" economies of Japan and the tigers of South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore. This triumph of Confucian capitalism has often been used to herald the emergence of a Pacific Century, an era in which the Newly Industrialized Countries (NICs) will overshadow the historic economic and political dominance of the US in the region.

To offer this latest designation, "Pan-Pacific," then, is to add yet another name to the encrustation of names for this region. It is no wonder that Young Mi Pak, as an Asian American, eyes such a move with skepticism. Her work echoes the question of Arif Dirlik and others, who ask "What's in a Rim?" and proceed to offer various contesting answers.⁴ The contributors to this issue of the *CWR Journal* might ask a similar question: what's in such a geopolitical construction for feminist theologians?

The point made earlier — that such geographical constructs are power-laden — is not new to any of our contributors. To pose yet another configuration, merging East and West of the Pacific has serious implications for the US Anglo, Jewish, Asian-American and East Asian women represented here. What does it mean to be a member of both sides of the Pacific? This question is not new either, as Young Mi Pak's article points out; Asian American feminist theologians must deal with this daily in their multiple locations and

in relation to their Asian sisters. Julia Matsui-Estrella takes this into her exploration of the hybrid roots of an Asian American leadership style. As Executive Director of PACTS (Pacific Asian and Asian-American Center for New Theologies and Strategies) and an inveterate grassroots activist, she notes that this style goes unrecognized even in multiracial meetings.

Professors Letty Russell and Shannon Clarkson, who have developed a global feminist D.Min. program, address this question as Anglo Americans. Letty Russell, in "Searching for Identity Around the Pacific Rim," reflects on such a question as a woman — from a personal and collegial association with Asian and Asian American feminist theologians, she asks: what stake and place do Anglo American women have in this conversation? Shannon Clarkson shows how such educational programs model the historic power imbalance between "east" and "west" when they require English as the primary mode of discourse. Both writers argue that there are no easy arrangements in such an exchange.

Another response emerges from Asian feminist theologians. Rev Chung Sook Ja offers a Woman Church developed out of the roots of Korean women's experience. The Korean experience contributes to a growing collection of such women-space worshipping communities. It would be provocative to learn what these women-based communities share and how they differ. Both Rev. Gao Ying and Prof. Hisako Kinukawa relate their experiences in the development of a feminist theology in their respective countries: the People's Republic of China and Japan. Both women note how a US-based education feminized their theologies, but could not ground them. Hisako Kinukawa delineates how one event, the Feminist D.Min. seminar in Japan, precipitated a surge of interest in feminist theology. Gao Ying's "Enthusiasm for a Feminist Theology" illustrates the particular complexities of women's liberation as it was supported by communism, but denied by Confucian culture and the Christian church. The latter, she shows, is slowly opening to women's leadership.

In the lively conversation between Chung Hyun Kyung and myself, the reader is privy to selections from our breakfast talks. Such pan-Pacific conversations occur informally and with increasing

regularity. This is the way ideas begin — as kitchen table talk on either side of the ocean. As is so often the case, we find in the poetry of Inna Jane Ray and Mary Ann Maggiore a real heart of longing for such exchange and connection. Their mix of Euro/Asian/Buddhist symbols clearly indicates that the search for spiritual depth has taken Anglo women into religious forms outside of a Christian context. In these West Coast exchanges, Buddhism predominates. This is a different move than Hyun Kyung, who recovers Buddhism as a part of her cultural heritage. What then is appropriation; how does one understand power in the balance of such religious mixing? What exchange might “second generation” Asian Christians offer “first generation” Anglo American Buddhists?

Angela Graboys also stands in this trend as an American Jewish feminist who studies Tibetan Buddhism. In the US, an astounding percentage of the “American Buddhist” leaders were raised in Jewish households. Her piece here has recently been expanded to address the need for feminists of three traditions to “face” each other. However, her argument for solidarity between Jews and Tibetans through use of the holocaust has provoked great disagreement by many people in the Jewish community. Perhaps this best represents the alliances that might be the fruit of such a trans-pacific enterprise, one that involves positional risk in its willingness to imagine new fields of engagement.

— Kathryn Poethig, summer, 1995

1 For further discussion on the naming of the region, consider Arif Dirlik, “The Asia-Pacific Idea: Reality and Representation in the Invention of a Regional Structure,” *Journal of World History* 3, No 1 (Spring 1992), O.H.K. Spate, “‘South Sea’ to ‘Pacific Ocean,’” *Journal of Pacific History* 12 (1977).

2 Arif Dirlik, “Introducing the Pacific,” in *What’s in a Rim? Critical Perspectives on the Pacific Region Idea*, ed. by Arif Dirlik, Westview Press, 1993, p. 5.

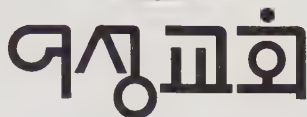
3 Valera Quisumbing, in *The Pacific Lake: Philippine Perspectives on a Pacific Community*, ed. by Jose P. Leviste, Jr., Manila: Philippines Council for Foreign Relations, 1986, p. 81.

4 See Dirlik, *What’s in a Rim?*

ALL KINDS OF WOMEN IN ONE PLACE

by Soo-Chul Chang,
Hyun-Sook Kim,
and Sook-Ja Chung

translated into English
by Sook-Ja Chung



Korean Women Church

CONFESSION OF FAITH: THE PUBLIC DECLARATION OF WOMAN JESUS FOR MISSION

spoken by all:

The spirit of God is upon us, Women Church,
because God has anointed us;
God has sent us to gather all kinds of women in one place,
from different denominations of divided churches,
to share their experiences, to unite in the love of God,
to protest structural evils and unjust situations,
and to seek human liberation, women's liberation.

spoken by single speaker:

God has placed us in this world,
to proclaim liberty to the captives who are caught
in the bonds of materialism and capitalism,
and sight for the blind who have closed their eyes

in individualism and individual-churchism
by stressing only a faith of blessing-receiving;
to liberate oppressed women under patriarchy
and authoritarianism and to proclaim the year
of God's favor for the realization of peace in the world.

God has supported Women Church in this land of Korea
to reform and transform Korean churches,
from the holy church of pulpit-centered
into the church in the round
which hand-in-hand practices equality and peace.

spoken by all:

from the preacher-centered church
into the preaching-sharing church,
from a blessing-receiving church
into a blessing-sharing church,
from an ideal-centered church
into praxis-centered church;
that all life may be brought alive.

*excerpted from "Korean Woman Jesus" Drama Worship
on the Fifth Anniversary of the Establishment of Women Church,
October 20, 1994.*

FROM HAWAII TO BERKELEY: Tracing Roots in Asian American Leadership

by Julia Matsui-Estrella

My mother, Matsuo Higa, arrived in Honolulu, Hawaii, in 1918 as a picture bride to a sugar plantation laborer. From the time I was born (my mother was 40 at the time), I was immersed in an all encompassing spiritual context. My mother's Okinawan animist spirituality was the foundation for her newly-acquired Christian spiritual practices. Her shrine was a corner in the house where she kept her hymnal and her Bible. Every morning like clockwork she would arise, read her Bible, sing several hymns and pray in her sacred space. My sister and I were invited to join her whenever we felt in the mood.

Although our home served as one spiritual environment, the crashing of the waves on Hawaii's beaches, the warmth of the trade winds, the swaying sounds of palm trees and the sounds of mynah birds everywhere were also absorbed into our bodies daily as spiritual food that we took for granted. One is aware of the interconnectedness of the rocks, the trees, the ocean, the sky, the waterfall, animals and human life when one runs around barefoot all day on red dirt. Every time I return to Hawaii from California, the spiritual food that had become a part of my body many years ago reactivates itself. All I have to do is feel the warm breeze of the trade winds and I begin to feel ecstatically nourished.

Very early on, I learned that spirituality and leadership went together. The leaders in our community were also spiritual leaders.

Unlike Western style of leadership, however, I experienced Asian American leadership in the context of Hawaii to be "making things happen" by working behind the scenes and in concert with a number of people. Someone who was a good listener, a consensus builder, possessing quiet strength, and working with genuine humility, was experienced as a leader. An individualistic style of leadership was frowned upon. Talkativeness was more often seen as an ego trip of "showing off." When I attended school, very few Asian American children would raise their hands to answer questions. Therefore, when Euro-American teachers gave favorable grades based on classroom verbal participation, Asian American students felt hurt and angry but often were not able to express this dismay.

Because our leadership styles are very different from Western styles, Asian Americans, especially women, are at a disadvantage when applying for top-level jobs. Often the glass ceiling experienced by Asian Americans is a result of our leadership style which goes counter to the western view of leadership — individualistic, verbal, dominant, and competitive. Many of us have to go into another gear when we attend Euro-American led meetings and conferences: we often leave feeling frustrated and alienated. To correct this situation, some of us have taken it upon ourselves to observe the dynamics at multi-racial meetings and share our observations with participants in order to build more awareness and sensitivity to different ways of providing leadership.

As we become a more racially diverse community in North America, we need to appreciate and value different kinds of leadership styles. The next time you attend a multi-racial meeting, take the time to be quiet and jot down who does most of the speaking. Then share your findings with the group before the end of the meeting in order to move the group to a new level of awareness and thus hopefully to a new way of interacting. By taking this responsibility onto ourselves, we help bring new leadership paradigms into being.

This piece is adapted from the forthcoming issue on leadership and spirituality in Women of Power.

SEARCHING FOR IDENTITY

Around the Pacific Rim

by Letty Russell

At the meeting of the American Academy of Religion (AAR) in Chicago, 1994, I was invited by Kwok Pui Lan to be a responder to a panel on "The Impact of National History on the Politics of Identity: Dialogue Between Asian and Asian American Women in Religion." In reflecting on the papers of this panel it became clear to me that there were many differences in context and issues of oppression. Yet, despite these differences, all the women faced a severe challenge to seek out their own identity as women oppressed, not only by patriarchy, but also by the history and national politics of their nations of origin around the Pacific Rim. This is a challenge very familiar to me as a European American who is continually trying to sort out what it means to be a woman who is a member of an oppressor nation, race, and class in a world of injustice and poverty.

This is a search for identity that is going on all around and not just across the Pacific Rim, and I would like to reflect on how this search provides a common feminist agenda, yet demands that the agenda be met in many different ways in each religious, cultural, political and economic setting. I know very little about these settings, yet I know that I have a responsibility to know more about the way in which the world structures of oppression affect my sisters and brothers in Asia, and I have spent some time working to support the development of feminist theologies in Asia.

BEGINNING THE CONVERSATION AROUND THE RIM

I have been involved in theological education in Asia since 1972 when I went with my late husband Hans Hoekendijk to teach for one term at the United Theological College in Bangalore, India, and to work as a Religious Consultant for the YWCA of India. In addition to teaching regular classes in Christian education I worked with the few women students on a special course related to women and ministry, and held Bible study groups using, "Women's Liberation in a Biblical Perspective," a booklet I had published for the YWCA and United Presbyterian Women in 1971.¹ One of those first students was Ranjini Rebera from Sri Lanka, who has continued to provide ecumenical leadership for women in Asia and Australia.² Following that term we then visited friends in other parts of Asia, particularly in Indonesia where my husband was raised in a missionary household.

I have maintained contacts with Asia through ecumenical channels such as the World Council of Churches and the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians, and given occasional speeches on feminist theology in the Pacific region. It was only in 1982, however, on a lecture tour sponsored by the National Council of Churches in Japan (NCCJ) Women's Desk in Japan and by the newly formed Korean Association of Women Theologians in Korea, that I began to lecture more extensively on feminist theology in Asia. Contacts have continued over the years so that last year I lectured at the meeting of the Association of Theological Education in South East Asia (ATESEA) on theological education and women. In cooperation with San Francisco Theological Seminary's Advanced Pastoral Ministries Program, Shannon Clarkson and I have organized an International Feminist D.Min. which has an Asia Section that has met in Tokyo and Seoul, as well as other sections meeting in San Anselmo, Geneva and in Costa Rica.

A continuing contact that lifts up Asian women's concerns in the US and Asia is the program of Asian/Asian American Women in Theology and Ministry. This group of women theologians will celebrate its 10th Anniversary this year as it continues to provide networking and support for Asian women in theological education in the US. Some of the participants in this program over the years have

included Kwok Pui Lan who is at Episcopal Divinity School in Boston; Chung Hyun Kyung at Ewha Women's University in Seoul; Sook-Ja Chung, at Woman Church in Seoul; Hisako Kinukawa from Tokyo Christian Women's University; Rita Nakashima Brock at Hamline University; and Jung Ha Kim, Georgia State University. In 1990, Kwok Pui Lan and I organized a Pacific Rim event that built on the networking of this group. We took 20 women to visit China, ten from diverse Asian countries, and ten from racially diverse US backgrounds. The group also included one woman from Sweden.³ Our hope was to strengthen the network of theologically trained women in China, Asia and the US. Some of those from China who continue to be involved in that network were Rev. Cao Shengjie and Rev. Gao Ying. This issue of the *CWR Journal* includes a number of those who continue this thinking together around the Pacific Rim.



This continuing interchange in Feminist Theologies has raised many questions and challenged me to develop my own theology in ways that advocate for the issues raised by Asian women. It has also challenged me to work with Shannon Clarkson in teaching contextual theology so that the methods are accessible to those who want to do their own work in different settings. Above all this thinking around the Rim has challenged me to look at the question of my own conflicted identity, as I seek to be a member of a community of women whose countries have often been blighted by the policies and racism of my own country. In this article I want to reflect particularly on this question of identity and whether, as I suspect, the struggle to choose ourselves as women is one of our common agendas.

Women and men who are considered marginal to society have a particularly difficult time in considering themselves valuable and worthy of choice. For those of us who are women and consider ourselves of less value than others it is particularly difficult to choose to be ourselves as women. Margaret Farley, one of my colleagues at Yale Divinity School, once said that there are certain things in our

lives we cannot change, but we have the option to choose or reject them. One of those things we choose is our Mothers! That is, in our lives we can ignore our Mothers or flee from them, or we can decide that in spite of everything we really wouldn't want another Mother and choose her.⁴

The same is true for choosing to be a woman. We were born women of a particular class, race and sexual orientation, and we can spend a lot of time wishing we were men, white, rich, or straight and being totally ambivalent about ourselves, our size, our looks, our prospects. Or we can decide that we really wouldn't want to be these other things and choose to be the woman we are. This is not an easy choice. In fact, it is much harder than choosing a school, a vocation, or to get married. Yet once we take this option, we have the opportunity to explore all the ways we might want to be a woman, affirming the value of who we are, and learning from other women the many and various ways we might live out our lives.

Choosing to make something of the gift of our bodies and our whole selves means, in the words of bell hooks in *Yearning*, "struggling to assert agency;" making something of the gift of ourselves through moral agency in the service and love of others.⁵ Choosing to be a woman includes becoming a feminist, *mujerista* or womanist, but it is also part of a deeper spiritual aspect of feminism. In feminism we learn to be pro-woman, and pro-ourselves if we are women, but choosing to be a woman is a gift of connection to ourselves in which, deep down from the center of our being, we know ourselves as loved and accepted by God and loved and accepted by ourselves as well. This spirituality of connection is experienced in those graced moments when we can say, "I would not choose it any other way." This awareness does not always stay with us. As our bodies change, and our lives and relationships change, we have over and over to choose our bodies and ourselves, embrace our gifts and do something with them.

ASIAN WOMEN

When we try to enter into a "Dialogue between Asian and Asian American Women in Religion," and then mix that with *mujerista*, womanist and white feminist responses as they did at the AAR panel, we discover just how difficult and complex this choosing becomes.

Which choices are we to make, and how can they possibly express solidarity with those who have made different choices? Feminist advocacy gets all mixed up with different racist, sexist, classist and homophobic patriarchal cultures, and then the cultures themselves are mixed as well! The Asians on that panel, Ghazala Anwar from Pakistan and Satoko Yamaguchi from Japan, both indicated the pain of this struggle to honor their culture but to resist the patriarchal structures of oppression present in its culture, religions and society.

Ghazala Anwar talked of the effects of national politics and the forces of neo-colonialism in the development of her identity, as well as her struggles to find genuine dialogue in shared life. But she also underlined the struggle to become whole and to choose her whole self when she said:

Since all of us have experienced the cutting of the umbilical chord, what prevents me then from engaging into dialogue across racial, ethnic, linguistic and religious identities? It is my attachment to and insecurity about my identity.⁶

Satoko Yamaguchi took up this same question of identity from the point of view of Japanese history and culture, recognizing not only the distorted and oppressive traditions of Japanese religion and culture, but also the importance of recovery of non-patriarchal aspects of Japanese society and history. She then added to her list of identity discoveries (one that points us to a link with the search of Asian American women) the complicity of the U.S. as a racist, neo-colonial power and promoter of national and economic self interest.⁷ Both she and Ghazala emphasized that the clue to dialogue is shared life and strategies for action, not just shared ideas.

This is the sort of dialogue that went on at the International Dialogue of Women Theologians sponsored by the Women's Commission of Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT) and held in Cosa Rica, December 7-13, 1994. This was the first dialogue we have had in which the Third World women theologians have included women from all the other parts of the world in one discussion of feminist theologies.⁸ It brought together 45 women from 24 countries, not just to discuss their differences, but to work together to develop theological reflection on women against

violence.⁹ The Asian agenda against militarism, economic violence, and especially the program to advocate for justice for the "Comfort Women," was vigorously discussed by both Hisako Kinukawa and Chung Hyun Kyung. Another important issue was cultural violence which deprives women of their cultural and religious heritage, and therefore, of a sense of their own identity and worth. Overall, the pain of confrontation with complicity in so much suffering made the meeting a challenge to white women like myself from North America. Yet there can be no authentic dialogue together if we don't confront our own histories and identities, and choose to betray the ways of oppression.

ASIAN AMERICAN WOMEN

The Asian panelists at the AAR session emphasized the issues out of their own historical contexts such as neo-colonialism, religious diversity, and political history. But they also raised questions about identity in the face of patriarchal traditions that were very similar to those faced by the Asian American panelists. With this second group, there was a major shift in the tone of the discussion, however, because here the question of identity revolved about the contradictions of being American and Asian in a North American context. Not only are two or more languages and cultures mixed together with no real guide for sorting out identity issues, but also this mix is lethal because of the sexism and racism that underlies the social construction of what it might mean to be an Asian woman in a white dominant society.

Thus Gale Yee has described her identity search as a Roman Catholic, growing up in the territory of the Blackstone Rangers gang of Chicago's South Side:

In very real ways, then, the holy Trinity of gender, race, and class — my Chinese ethnicity, my lower class status, and my female gender — impinged upon my Asian-American identity to put me outside of the mainstream of American society.¹⁰

Along with other panelists she reflected on the false naming of herself and others as Asian Americans rather than Chinese American, Korean American, and the many names needed to specify national, rather than racial background. This "No Name Woman"

syndrome, described by Maxine Hong Kingston in *The Woman Warrior*, is alive and well to the extent that often Asian women not only have no name, they are also ignored and treated as if they are not even present.¹¹

Jung Ha Kim provided us with a very helpful and critical analysis of some of these same factors from a 1.5 generation Korean American background where life is a constant struggle against socially constructed, false stereotypes about both Asians and Asian Americans who are treated as "monolithic entities in the US." She has reminded us all of the



pain that comes with the struggle to choose to be ourselves. "I did not realize, she said, "that one cannot automatically "achieve" an identity of hyphenated American status in the States but has to struggle with the life-long process of on-going identity formation."¹²

This struggle has had constant attention in the national meetings of the Asian and Asian American Women in Theology and Ministry over the last ten years. Because the struggle is the same but the context quite different, the Asians and Asian-Americans often find themselves at odds with each other about the way to approach this agenda of learning to choose themselves. Even my relation to the group as an Advisor has a different reception, depending on whether racism and white domination is a major factor in being a "no name woman," or whether neo-colonialist economics and educational systems are the issue. We all continue to find ourselves isolated in our own contexts due to our backgrounds and/or our commitments, and in search of a network of naming and support. Because of this need, Asian and Asian American women studying and teaching theology in the US continue to support one another. This March they will be meeting at Union Theological Seminary in New York to discuss, "Diversity Within Us: The Challenge of Community Among Asian and Asian American Women," and I hope they will let me listen in!

EUROPEAN AMERICAN WOMEN

Perhaps the good news in all of this is that we are all part of this struggle to choose ourselves, and value dialogues like this just because it helps us know more about that struggle. This journey toward choosing to be a woman, is what I would describe as a journey of self-liberation together with others. It is a spiritual journey in discovery of what God intends us to become. I know myself that it takes a long time and that it happens over and over throughout our lifetime. As a child I spent time wishing I were not so tall and "tom-boyish," and I tried to choose being like other girls (the popular and socially acceptable ones!) As I moved into my work in the East Harlem Protestant Parish I chose to be a misfit in an interracial community of poverty and then to become ordained because I had settled for being a misfit in society. But it was only in the 1970s that I was helped by other women to see that women who did not fit the cultural stereotypes were always misfits, and I chose to be a woman and to work for the full humanity of all women together with men.

I know as a European American woman that I also have to choose, and to keep on choosing, to be a white, professional, US citizen and to work against my own privilege; choose to be a European American woman and search out the fragments of a usable past that could help free me to stand in solidarity with my sisters of all colors. And perhaps then, in this choosing, I will be able to move into the kind of "mutually beneficial strategy sharing," that Satoko Yamaguchi called true dialogue.

This last summer while sharing in a class of our Asia section of the International Feminist D.Min. program I had a double experience of what this constant choosing is like. First of all, along with Shannon Clarkson, Kathie Sakenfeld, Hisako Kinukawa, and Sook-Ja Chung, I assisted Chung Hyun Kyung as she taught the two week course on "Culture, Religion, and Asian Feminist Liberation Theology." The experience of being Hyun Kyung's tutor was amazing! In order to be a partner with her and the others in the learning process, I needed to focus on ways of strengthening the learning process around Hyun Kung's teaching agenda and not my own. It made it so much more clear to me just how accustomed I was to including professorial

privilege in my identity choices, and how important power sharing was in education.

Second, the discussion of Asian religions and the issues of feminist advocacy that cut across all different religions helped me see that I could not continue to develop my own partnership around the Pacific Rim unless I were to spend much more time on the ways religion and culture are linked. We need to study all religions, including Christianity, from the perspective of how each does and does not promote justice from the perspective of women and all oppressed groups.

I enjoyed the partnership in teaching with Hyun Kyung and the others and joining her in work toward a feminist theology around the Pacific Rim that is life giving for poor, oppressed and marginalized Asian women of all religions.¹³ To this end I join many women in searching out the meaning of our choice to be women and to be Christian in our many and different multi-cultural contexts.

1. Letty M. Russell, "Women's Liberation in a Biblical Perspective," N.Y.: National Board, YWCA and United Presbyterian Women, 1971; booklet.

2. Ranjini Rebera, ed., *We Cannot Dream Alone: A Story of Women in Development*, Geneva: WCC Publications, 1990.

3. Cf. *In God's Image*, "Women, Church, China," Vol. 10:3, Autumn, 1991, Kwok, Pui Lan, Guest Editor of entire issue.

4. Letty M. Russell, *Church in the Round: Feminist Interpretation of the Church*, Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1993, p. 82-87.

5. bell hooks, *Yearning*, Boston: South End Press, 1990, p. 206-207.

6. Ghazala Anwar, "The Role of National Histories in the Politics of Identity: A Dialogue Between Asian and Asian American Women in Religion," unpublished paper delivered at the AAR, Chicago, November 19, 1994, Women and Religion Section, p. 9.

7. Satoko Yamaguchi, unpublished paper delivered at the AAR session in Chicago, 1994, p.205.

8. Cf. Virginia Fabella and Mercy Amba Oduyoye, eds., *With Passion and Compassion: Third World Women Doing Theology* [Reflections from the Women's Commission of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians], Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1988.

9. Cf. "Final Statement of the 'Women Against Violence' Dialogue," available from Mary John Mananzan, Coordinator, St. Scholastica's College, P.O. Box 3153, Guinto, Manila, Philippines.

10. Gale A. Yee, "Inculturation and Diversity in the Politics of National Identity," unpublished paper delivered at the AAR, Chicago, 1994, p. 3-4.

11. Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1976.

12. Jung Ha Kim, unpublished paper delivered at the AAR, Chicago, 1994, p. 7.

13. Chung Hyun Kyung, *Struggle to be the Sun Again*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1990, p. 112-114.



PAN-PACIFIC IDENTITY

A Skeptical Asian American Response

by Young Mi Pak

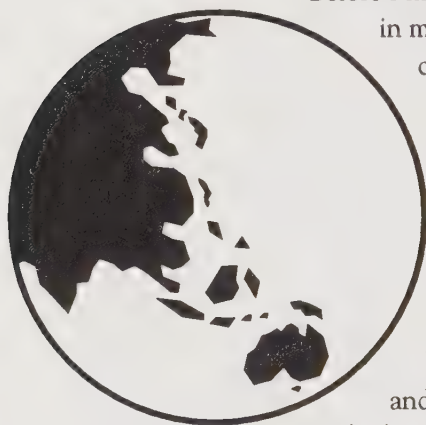
P*an-pacific* is a new term and new to me. Being on the West Coast, I often hear that the Pacific Rim is the future, though mostly in the economic and political context. But what does it mean for us to theorize on *pan-pacific* feminist theology?

I can think of several ways to look at this term, *pan-pacific*. The most obvious way of seeing it might be to imagine a world map. In most of the world maps made in the US, the Atlantic ocean occupies the center flanked by Europe and the American continents on its right and left sides, respectively. Now let's open our eyes to that rare map where the Pacific Ocean is placed in the center with Asia on the left and the Americas on the right. If we pursue this geography a little further in terms of power, I can think of the old world where the Americas and Africa were the main object of European imperialism while in the 20th century, Asia and the Pacific Islands have become the main object of Japanese and US imperialism. While the Indian subcontinent and Hong Kong were colonies of Britain and Southeast Asia that of France, American presence through its military bases, economic trade and cultural transmission drowns out other imperial forces in the Asian side of the Pacific, especially in the post-World War II era.

I can think of *pan-pacific* in a positive way that those countries around the Pacific Rim cooperate to form a Pacific version of the European common community. I have a hard time imagining a

community of somewhat equitable membership since historically the power in this region has been lopsided in favor of the US, and perhaps, Japan. Given this historical context, it raises some legitimate questions about the possibility of genuinely open and heterogeneous *pan-pacific* feminist theologies.

I must confess that the category, *pan-pacific*, troubles me. In order to make sense of the term we must engage the cross-current discourse on identity which inform our endeavors so that our theological practices are more inclusive and open. We need to historicize Asian and Asian American experiences and examine how our personal narratives as practitioners of feminist theology are intertwined in those histories. Let me illustrate why this kind of a historical narrative is important through my own identity as an Asian American.



Before I immigrated to the US with my family in my teens, I was not particularly conscious of my identity. From the moment we landed in the US, I was forced to think about myself. Growing up in a suburb of Boston in the 70s, the common question was, "Where are you from?" Until I became a US citizen, I knew that I was Korean. But the distance between the US and Korea grew steadily every year.

I had come from Korea, but I was losing touch with my friends in Korea. I stopped reading Korean books. The reminder of my Koreanness was limited to an occasional craving for Korean food and conversation with my parents in Korean. I had a vague longing that someday I would go back to Korea. Then I became an American citizen. I expected people to relate to me as an American. I felt entitled to all the rights guaranteed by the US Constitution. But people still treated me as a foreigner. The years of being asked who I was and my desire to be accepted as a normal person took its toll. I had to figure out who I was. So began the journey of the self.

My identities have been numerous: Korean, American, woman, Asian, Korean American, Christian, Asian American, Asian American woman, Catholic, or just plain human being. If you ask me now who I am, I would say it depends on my mood and who you are. Jin Lee came up with 23 combinations of terms that describe her identity using the categories of Korean, Asian, American, woman and artist.¹ Imagine the possible combinations if we were to add categories of sexual orientation, class, marital status, religion, politics, profession and so on.

Though there are many important categories to analyze my life, because of dominant racism in the US, my main category in a public discourse has been race/ethnicity: *Asian American*. While we can say that other categories such as Korean, American, woman, Christian, and class are all constructed, they have not been as problematic for me as the term Asian American. I had to learn its history and its meaning to embrace it consciously as my own. In other words, being an Asian American is not just a biological or cultural process, but a political one. About ten years ago, an undergraduate student from LA told me that the term, *oriental* was derogatory and that in its place I should use Asian American. *Oriental* grocery stores still abound all over the US, and Asians and Asian Americans use this term. But I am sure that those who take the introductory Asian American history class, especially at University of California campuses, will not use the word, *oriental*. The history of the term *Asian American* tells a story of American people of Asian descent who have struggled to define their own identity and to overcome racial discrimination. In search for my own self, bit by bit I have tried to learn the history of Asian America, read narratives by Asian American authors and watched films of Asian American issues. To be in the midst of Asian Americans,



I came to the Bay Area for graduate study. Thus, it was not a natural process but a conscious effort to locate myself in the larger community, culture and history of Asian America as my home in the US.

Here I want to trace the history of Asian America in terms of identity-making to show how its shaping of the Asian American self has taken place. Until the 60s, Asians in the US were only 0.5 percent of the total population, and were mostly Chinese, Japanese and Filipinos. There was no collective identity other than the pejorative term, *oriental*, which was forced upon them by the dominant society. In the late 19th and early 20th century when the first Chinese and Japanese came to the US, they did not identify themselves as Asians. Because of their situations in Asia — Japan colonized Korea and invaded China — these ethnic groups kept distant from one another. Even among those with the same national background, people thought of their identity as based on distinct cultural, political and regional loyalties. For example, they would identify themselves as coming from Toisan or Hoiping for Chinese, and Yamaguchi or Hiroshima prefecture for Japanese.² Because the dominant whites indiscriminately lumped Asians together, ethnic groups distanced themselves from one another. During the late 1800s, Japanese sought to distance themselves from Chinese who were subjected to the anti-Chinese movement in California. In the 1940s, when Japanese Americans were put into concentration camps because Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, other Asians groups such as Chinese, Koreans, and Filipinos wore buttons that said, "I am not Japanese." Though Asian groups did work together organizing the sugar plantations in Hawaii and some Koreans and Filipinos lived near Japantown and Chinatown, little consciousness of a collective group identity existed. Because the US Constitution only recognized free whites and African Americans (since 1870) as eligible to be naturalized, Asian aliens were not entitled to any legal rights. In short, Asians were seen as unassimilable aliens.

In the late 60s, influenced by the Black Power movements and various other self-determination movements, Asians began to pursue their own identity. The Asian American movement was initiated by the American born Chinese, Japanese, and Filipinos on college

campuses in the San Francisco Bay Area and activists concerned with the appalling conditions of Asian ethnic ghettos such as San Francisco's Chinatown. This movement forged a pan-Asian consciousness that shifted the identity of "Asian ethnics" to "Asian Americans."³ Through consciousness raising, many Asian Americans came to see that their identity had been subjugated to the dominant white society's cultural values and standards. In this cultural assimilation, they denied their own cultural values. The identity issue, then, was not simply a personal matter but also a political one. Only through determining collective identity and collective action — especially involvement in community issues and politics, could they eradicate the denigrating dominant perceptions of Asian Americans and heal their psychic, emotional, economic and legal wounds. The activists rejected the notion of the dual self: an abstract Asian half plus an American half, where one can analytically separate the Asian and American heritage and values. Instead they wanted to recognize a distinct Asian American identity based on historical and social experiences of Asians in the US. Thus, an Asian American embraces all the historical experiences of Asian ethnic groups. Drawing from Marxist thoughts and the self-determination movements in the Third World — particularly the philosophy of Mao Tse-Tung — the Asian American activists and artists emphasized grassroots action and people's responsibility in Asian American communities. When the Asian American Studies Department was established at the Berkeley campus of the University of California in the early 70s, community internship was part of its curriculum. In short, through the Asian American movement, Asian American activists attempted to define and determine for themselves their identity and culture as *Asian American*.



The landscape in the recent US has changed. With the enactment of the Immigration and Naturalization Act (1965), the repressive political climate in Asia and the demise of Vietnam War, new immigrants and refugees entered the US. According to census figures, Asians were about 1.5% of the total population in 1980 while 2.9% (7 millions) in 1990. The cultural, psychological, and linguistic gap between the American born (mostly second, third and fourth generation Japanese and Chinese) and the presence of immigrant/refugees (Chinese, Korean, Filipinos, Vietnamese, Indians, just to name a few) has been growing. Since the 1980s, a new identity has been forced upon Asian Americans by the dominant white society: a hard-working, passive and uncomplaining model of minority achieving the American dream, an example to be emulated by other racial minority groups. The history of the Asian American movement, the Civil Rights movement, and racism in the US was not available to these adult immigrants and refugees due to language barriers and requirements of survival in an advanced capitalist society. Meanwhile their children, raised in the US, experience a conflicted identity and are exposed to Asian American consciousness in high school and college. Moreover, due to the Cold War legacy of the Korean and Vietnam Wars, many of these new Asians are steeped in anti-Communist ideology which makes it difficult for them to be critical of the US domestic and foreign policies.

Now in the late 80s and 90s, we Asian Americans scream to be recognized for our diversity. While the term "Asian American" was radical in the 70s, it is no longer adequate for the burgeoning number of Asian Americans arriving from East Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and also the Pacific Islands. This new group is clustered under a new term, "Asian Pacific Islander (API)," which represents the diverse constituents of Americans of Asian and Pacific descents. And not all constituents have shared power equally. Kauanui and Han note that Pacific Islanders have been "*engulfed*, swallowed whole and remaining ever invisible among (east) Asian Americans." ⁴

This historically enlarged scope of Asian America, now Asian Pacific, strives for a global identity. In the 80s, we invoked *women of color* to designate the commonality of non-white women's experience

in feminist theory. This term implied the geographic location of north America, especially the dominant voice of African American feminists or womanists. More recently, this term seems to be replaced by the more encompassing term, *third world feminism*, which includes not just the diverse experiences of Chicana/Hispanic women, Native American, Asian American and African American (US third world feminism⁵), but those women in Africa and Asia. This kind of global identity allows Asian American women to be free from the identity of "minority status."⁶ In this regard, the term *pan-pacific* might be a welcoming term to further expand this global identity. But this term is still problematic. If we consider US third world feminism as "differential consciousness" against the hegemonic structure in the US feminist theory, and if we consider Asian American identity as "oppositional consciousness" against the hegemonic structure of the American self, then what critique does "*pan-pacific consciousness*" offer? How would this category serve to empower the marginalized people in the Pacific Rim?

Though I am suspicious of the category, *pan-pacific*, I find this term useful in bridging the chasm between Asian/Pacific Islanders and Asian Pacific Americans. Instead of discarding this term altogether, we may expand this concept to bring together those in Asia, the Pacific Islands, and those of Asian/Pacific descent in north America. We may begin this by simply engaging in a dialogue about our differences and acknowledging that our 'Asianness' in the eyes of the dominant American culture is nothing but a hegemonic illusion. My Asian American identity has not just been formed in opposition to the imposition of 'American' identity, but also through my encounters with the realities of "Asia."

In search of my Asian roots, I studied Korean history and culture. I was deeply moved by the struggles of the Korean factory women workers who fought for the recognition of female labor unions and workers' rights in the 1980s. Like many young Korean Americans, I made a journey back to Korea and spent a year learning about Korean churches and reclaiming my Korean heritage. Growing up in the US with limited contact with Koreans, I had stereotyped them. Living in the midst of ten million Koreans in Seoul, I came to see

such diversity of personality, physical features, and cultural expressions and attitudes that it became no longer possible to glibly generalize about "Koreans." Traveling through China was even more shocking. Its regional diversity seemed more pronounced than in Korea. I was fascinated by the temples in China which housed a dizzy variety of local gods, unlike predominant Sakyamuni and Bodhisattva statues in Korea. Through my journey in Asia, I reaffirmed my Korean heritage. This experience helped me to overcome the narrow internalized view of Asia that I, like many of Asian Americans, have perpetuated by thinking that only our family traditions and values represent Asia, a point well illustrated by Jade Snow Wong's *Fifth Chinese Daughter*.

During my itineration to local churches in the Midwest and West Coast to share my experience in Korea, I came to recognize the necessary connection between Asians and Asian Americans. I knew about the interconnection between US foreign policy in Asia and domestic policies towards Asian Americans, such as the link between the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor and the internment of Japanese Americans. But on my visits to these churches, this interconnection took a personal meaning. For one thing, many of these local church people in the Midwest — and even on the Northwest coast — were not aware that there were Asian American churches in their denomination. My short biography characterizing me as an Asian American was posted in each church I visited. People continued to assume, however, that I was a Korean visiting the US on a lecture tour and would be returning to Korea. They complemented me on my English. One retired gentleman remarked with what I understood to be a heartfelt, welcoming smile, "We love to hear from foreigners."

To many of these church people, I had no right to talk about America from a critical perspective because I, as a "foreigner," was not supposed to know much about America. People were also ignorant about the impact of US foreign policy on Korea. In one high school, teachers were not interested in hearing about the US military occupation in Korea and the impact of US foreign policy on Korea during the Cold War period. They only were interested in the

struggle of students and factory workers against the Korean military dictatorship. I was amazed that, though my itineration took place soon after the massive US media coverage of the Seoul Olympics, people were extremely ignorant about Korea.

My internship in Korea and itineration in the US taught me that there are intimate connections between Korean and Korean American issues. Without some understanding of Korean history, I found it impossible to truly understand the lives of Korean immigrants. Though I have used my own example as a Korean American, the word, *pan-pacific* reminds me of the fluidity and connection between Asia/Pacific Islanders and Asian Pacific America. This understanding, moreover, is central to our survival and empowerment as a minority group in the US.

The reality in the US is that all of us who are of Asian Pacific descent, whether we identify as Asian Pacific American or Asian/Pacific Islander women, are seen as the same. All of us go through the daily ritual of being asked: "Where are you from?" An Asian/Pacific Islander sister who is unaware of Asian American history might not find this question problematic and might unwittingly perpetuate the stereotype of a good Asian/Pacific Islander woman with an intention of being a good-willed cultural ambassador from Asia/Pacific Islands. An Asian Pacific American sister, on the other hand, hampered by a limited understanding of Asia/Pacific Islands transmitted through her family tradition and instilled by the dominant stereotyped images of Asian/Pacific Islanders, might want to distance herself from them to be accepted as American. As an example, many second generation Asian Americans have often wanted to distance themselves from their immigrant parents who have heavy accents and espouse traditional Asian values (as opposed to supposedly liberal American values). At the same time, when these second generation young people go to college, they often go to study in the Asian countries of their parents' heritage. They return to the US with a new sense of identity, empowered by their broader understanding of Asia. Partly due to communication and transportation technology, travel between Asia and the US has become much more commonplace. In other words, even as I insist on

an Asian American identity, such an identity cannot be seen only in the context of the US, but must be seen in the larger sense of the Asian continent as well.

To think of myself in this context of *pan-pacific* consciousness is to acknowledge the reality of a fluidity of experiences as an Asian Pacific American and an Asian/Pacific Islander woman. Thus the term, *pan-pacific*, has been a useful category for me to reflect on the interconnection between Asian/Pacific Islander and Asian Pacific American identities and experiences. I prefer the term *Asian/Pacific/American* to *pan-pacific* to make explicit the political struggles and meaning of my lived experience as an Asian American. I add "/" in the place of blank space between each word to indicate "conscious" fluidity and heterogeneity among words. Meanwhile we need to uncover and create the history and meaning of the term *pan-pacific* that includes the identity struggles of the marginalized people in the Pacific Rim against colonialism and/or racism.

1. Jin Lee. "List and Descriptions 1988-1990," *Whitewalls: A Journal of Language and Art*, No. 28, Summer 1991.

2. Yen Le Espiritu, *Asian American Panethnicity*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1992, p. 19.

3. William Wei, *The Asian American Movement*, Philadelphia, Temple University Press, 1993, p. 45.

4. J. Kehaulani Kauanui and Ju Hui "Judy" Han, "'Asian Pacific Islander': Issues of Representation and Responsibility," in *The Very Inside*, edited by Sharon Lim-Hing, Totonto, Sister Vision Press, 1994, p. 377.

5. Chela Sandoval, "U.S. Third World Feminism: The Theory and Method of Oppositional Consciousness in the Postmodern World," *Genders*, No. 10, Spring 1991.

6. Elaine Kim, foreword in *Reading the Literatures of Asian America*, edited by Shirley Geok-Lim and Amy Ling, Philadelphia, Temple University, 1992, p. xv.

7. See Sandoval.

HAIR NETS

by Inna Jane Ray

Three centuries ago in the low countries of Europe, lacemakers twisted filigree around tiny pins, tracing almost invisible patterns into translucent fabrics with linen threads finer than their own hair; sitting almost immobile for long hours in dank basements below sea level lit by a single candle flame.

Now in our time young Asian women living in the cities of the Pacific Rim trace miniscule patterns into silicon disks for the computer industry, staring intently through microscopes for long hours in a chilled and filtered environment, and like the lacemakers before them, go blind. They cannot see their children.

Snooper in the files
between the racks of spindles
down the distaff side

I trace my ancestry
the job on the tide,
stitching.

A strand, a scrap
hump and dump her
use once and throw away

In what speech utter?

When my hidden mothers
thrown to scum on the tidal line,
out of sight, out of mind

mutter at the gutter's mouth?

What will bind me to my craft
a raft on the wreck of the world?

How shall I live with this list of the blind?

Where is the image that gathers my mind?

A snood! A snood!

GOD AS A SECOND LANGUAGE?

Learning from the Pacific Rim

by Shannon Clarkson

E ducation comes from the Latin word to “lead out.” Certainly one image of that phrase might be a group of individuals being led out into something or somewhere by another person. A second interpretation might suggest a scene revealing an individual holding open a door, through which is emerging a group of other individuals. Yet a third understanding would see a group of individuals walking together into new territory. My own understanding of education, and of my role as an educator, has followed the latter image. My experience teaching women from Asia has been consistent with this latter model.

Teaching an English language workshop to graduate students at the University of New Haven provided my first opportunity for teaching Asian women. Together we tried to make sense of the oftentimes inscrutable ways of the English language. We laughed at the literal meanings of one another’s metaphors, and I learned that my assumptions about writing and teaching were very definitely those of a white westerner. Plagiarism, practically a mortal sin in schools in the United States, is an unknown quantity to people from many countries in Asia, and probably elsewhere as well. My students were as amazed that I could think someone could “own” an idea as I was that they would freely copy pages of text from a book without ever citing a source.

My learning continued as I participated in the International Feminist D.Min. sponsored by San Francisco Theological Seminary (SFTS) which began in Tokyo the summer of 1993. Again we struggled with articles and participles, with endnotes and bibliographies. And together we began to create a way to talk about writing theologically that would be helpful to both students and teachers. Letty Russell explained the "theological spiral," a way of thinking theologically by analyzing one's experiences, one's social reality, and one's biblical and church traditions. The final step in this theological analysis leads to a search for clues for transformation before starting the process again, as new insights or experiences bring new challenges.

However, the problem with talking about a four-step process with people working in a second language and a second educational system is that literalness will prevail. Our challenge became one of learning how to explain the thinking and writing so that a spiral, not a step ladder, would emerge. The students and I became "co-learners" as we looked for ways to overcome this dilemma.

One day, I began to capitalize on one of our most frequent experiences — preparing a meal. I related their experiences, their social environment, their biblical and church traditions to basic food groups (rice, beans, vegetables, etc.). If all the food for a meal is jumbled together, the meal will not be particularly successful. Yet if the available food is examined for its relevance for the needs at hand, if foods that are absent are sought, if proportions are measured, if certain items are selected and others rejected, at least for the moment, a planned meal begins to emerge. Whether one works with a specific recipe or uses a more intuitive plan, order and integration evolve and eventually "the meal" is ready.

Transferring this metaphor into practice in writing a theological analysis of one's ministry was still not easy. Language problems did not immediately disappear and a tendency persisted to write "what was expected." I still am creating a handbook for theological writing in English as a second language.

What have I learned from my Pacific Rim experiences? First, that language can be a barrier, but in spite of linguistic challenges, communication and transformation are possible and may even flourish, if we relax and let our intuitions and imaginations help us. Second, that organization by geography may seem to make sense on a map, but in reality, the term Asian encompasses a wide variety of people.

When we gathered for our program, the student participants were from three countries: South Korea, Japan, and the Philippines. In addition, one was a "Korean in Japan." Some were from countries that have been colonized while others were from colonizing countries. Learning to dialogue across these barriers was, and is, quite the challenge. Because the program is sponsored by SFTS, all the work must be done in English. Since three of the teachers spoke only English, the lectures and discussions were in that language. However, when students gathered to share ideas, their own first languages predominated, unless they were in a mixed-nationality group.

The "English only" requirement posed great difficulties for some. Although everyone in the seminar had studied English for many years, speaking and listening to English can be stressful, especially when continued participation in the program is dependent upon passing the TESOL exam with a particular score. I tried to find patterns in their grammatical errors which could be explained and corrected. I emphasized that "church" ends with a "ch" sound, not with an "e" sound as in "churchie." I encouraged the participants to listen to American radio stations and to rent English language videos. I also encouraged them to form work groups where they would speak only English which would meet regularly until the following summer.

Before our gathering in Seoul began, the SFTS director asked if I would arrange to have a diagnostic language exam administered. I agreed. When I announced this to the group, there was great resistance and many questions. Eventually, many of the members refused to take the exam. Now I do not question the problem of the domination of the English language. As a sociolinguist I know that each person's language includes something of their culture and even their thought processes. Because of our particular grammar and

vocabulary we experience the world in different ways. Yet in order to communicate, we need to learn other languages.

Who learns whose language is certainly a political issue, correlated most often with power and economic oppression, and sometimes with religious oppression as well. When the US government forced the Native Americans to live on reservations, English was the only language permissible in the schools. As immigrants settled in the US, the public schools required the language spoken to be English. Today debates rage in the US over proposals for "English only" in the schools. Canada as well has had difficult and fiery debates about language requirements.

Anyone who has tried to encourage the use of inclusive language, whether in a church setting or a secular one, knows that such a proposal often evokes strong emotional reactions. For human beings, issues of language have to do with issues of self. The way we form our words and sentences is endemic to who we are. Our right to speak is a right of living. When we are asked to change or modify our language, we often experience the request as though we had been asked to alter our looks or some other intrinsic part of ourselves. The request is particularly threatening when the person making the request is a gate-keeper for something which is desired.

As a representative of the seminary's linguistic policy, I was seen as a very threatening person. As a white woman feminist from the US, I was keenly aware of certain issues about oppressors and oppression. As a linguist, I recognized the intricate relationship between language, thought, and culture. But knowing these things does not solve the problems. There are no easy solutions. Perhaps what should be sought is an agreement to work and walk together, knowing that much is lost in the translation and that great trust and effort are necessary to embark on our journey.

ZEN GARDEN

by Mary Ann Maggiore

Fingers of shade baffling
the sleep of sleeping stones
Breathing stones
Breathing the air of eucalyptus.

Were there a moment of stone
In each diurnal ring
Were there cymbals of light played
By the strings of bamboo
In concert not competition

Were the pebbles of white
Streams of thought lain round the
Smooth islands of action
This world would be a better place
And I would have spared you
My impatience on the telephone.

from *Salt*, San Francisco, September 1988

ENTHUSIASM FOR A FEMINIST THEOLOGY:

The Glorious Revolution and the Covenental Church

by Rev. Gao Ying

When I consider women in the Chinese church, as a female pastor, three questions arise:

"What does it mean to be a Chinese woman?"

"What does it mean to be a woman pastor?"

"What does it mean to be a young woman pastor?"

These questions are neither theoretical nor academic questions, but they are existential questions that arise from deep within my own experience. To begin answering these questions is the beginning of feminist theology. As a pastor serving in a church of more than 1,000 members, my daily responsibilities are overwhelming. The Christians expect so much of me, especially women parishioners, that, to be honest, I am working very hard from early morning till late evening seven days a week. I derive much joy and satisfaction from the work, and I am making friends with all sorts of people. When we try to understand women in the church in China, we need to learn about the general situation of women's social status in Chinese society, both at present and traditionally.

During my studies in the United States, I have frequently heard women speakers allude to China's former Chairman Mao Tse Tung's

claim, that "women hold up half the sky." Behind his poetic statement lies the poignancy of an obvious truth. Without acknowledging the participation of women in all areas of life, we can go no further. Mao's insight into sexual inclusion may have been based on political expediency, but it was long overdue, and gave rise to a new "feminism" in China.

The year 1949 marked the success of the revolution under communist leadership. A basic change in the social system happened throughout China. It made very strong attacks on many semi-feudal and semi-colonial ideas. The government closed down brothels and did away with marriage practices that violated the dignity of womanhood, including the most inhumane practice of marrying child brides. Women began to enjoy the same rights as men in going to school and in employment.

According to the old Confucianist teaching, a woman had no self-definition apart from the male reference in her life. A woman was bound to three "obediences": that of being subject to her father prior to marriage, to her husband after marriage, and finally to her son if she became widowed. Women have now been liberated from such feudal practices, with their social position greatly elevated.

The whole new generation of women takes the concept of equal opportunity for granted. It is no longer an automatic assumption that the woman's job is to take care of the house and the children. In education, employment and economic status, women have gained notable equality with men. Their legal rights are guarded by the State Constitution, women's federations, and agencies at all administrative levels. We Chinese women have been encouraged to demonstrate our ability alongside our male counterparts since 1949.

Women's liberation has had a strong impact on the church. Before the founding of the People's Republic of China, there were few women ministers, but since 1949 many women ministers have appeared. Since 1979, the church in China has ordained more than 400 new pastors, of whom more than 60 are women. At present, one of every ten persons receiving ordination is a woman. Most women seminarians expect to some day be ordained.

Though China's liberation has brought about dramatic changes in the lives of women, China's 2000 years of male-dominated tradition cannot be wiped out in a single generation, for sexism is far older than political systems. The feudal belief of men's superiority over women is so deeply rooted in people's minds that it is hard to overcome, even within the church.

Women are vital in the life and work of the Chinese church. Today more than half of the believers are women. In my church, women make up more than 60 percent of the congregation, and most of these women are very involved in congregational activities: cleaning the church, acting as ushers, visiting, singing in the choir and preparing communion. But ironically, the hands that prepare the communion are not allowed to distribute the Eucharist at the communion service on Sundays. They make the bread and grape juice, they set the Eucharist table, and they clean the cups and plates afterwards, but their participation is only permitted behind the scenes. The expectation is that they will be submissive, rather than assert their own worth and identity in the church.



Two years ago, upon my return to Beijing after studying in the United States, I was startled to see only white haired men standing at the front of the church receiving the consecrated elements from the pastor before distributing them to the congregation. The striking contrast between what I saw in Western churches and the reality I faced in my Beijing church was shocking. In time, I commented on the absence of female participants at the Eucharist and expressed my desire to include women in the pastoral committee of the church. I did not receive a positive response. The reason given was that women's participation could not be considered until a woman pastor was engaged. I was not ordained at the time, but my ordination two years ago stubbornly led me to bring up the question again. Again it

was dismissed, this time on the grounds that female participation would offend certain worshipers, particularly those from the "Little Flock" background, who strongly dispute women's equal status within the church.

As equal treatment of women was not present for fear that some veteran Christians might be offended, the senior pastor, on the grounds of gender alone, had not yet even appointed me as the officiate at the Eucharist during my first eleven months after ordination.

All of this made me realize that the struggle before Christian women for an equal role in the church is more difficult than even the most conservative realize.

However, though I waited patiently, I never gave up the struggle. Finally, one day I was asked to replace a sick pastor and officiate at the Eucharist at the Saturday evening worship. I took this opportunity to set a precedent for women's participation in the distribution of communion. It was the first time in this church that a woman had actively participated in the Eucharist. It was also the first time I had officiated at communion since I had been ordained. Although Saturday evening worship is much smaller than Sunday morning worship, with around 400 worshipers, it was a breakthrough and genuine step towards gender equality.

It took another six months before I was scheduled to officiate at the Eucharist on Sunday. And despite my growing awareness of the powerful conservative element in the church, I was still surprised by the Chairman of the Board's request that if a female pastor were to officiate at communion, then the congregation ought to be divided and sit apart by gender.

Eight years ago, when I first preached as an intern, I was confronted by a similar response. At the time, I knew nothing about women's issues in the church, and I did not have a feminist consciousness. Afterwards, I was told that an active old time church member, who went to church every Sunday, stayed away from church that particular Sunday because he had heard that a woman would be preaching. While it is relatively easy for reforms and changes in

society to take place, human acceptance often lags far behind. It takes much longer for people's thinking to be changed. The feudal attitudes which are festering in people's minds are also present in the church.

I can still recall the day Bishop K.H. Ting, the president of the Nanjing seminary, preached a sermon entitled, "Motherhood, Womanhood, and Godhood." He said, "With the rise of the women's movements there also arose in the church an opinion that opposes the whole masculine approach to our understanding of God and looks to womanhood and motherhood to supplement our knowledge of God's love. We are reminded that when Jesus calls God 'Father,' he is emphasizing that God is Father and not that God is male not female. All good and unselfish love, including mother's love, can help us know God."

Those who later read the sermon in the seminary publication *The Nanjing Theological Review* reacted so critically that topics alluding to a feminist perspective were not attempted again for five years.

Is the socialist revolution a sufficient condition for female liberation within the church? It is my opinion that certain constraints keep coming back to haunt us. There are signs everywhere, often subtle but also very visible, that the old patriarchal attitudes towards women still exist in the church. In most cases the evidence is soft, not hard; it is more a matter of omission, where little mention is made of women's needs or rights. Women are still expected to follow the lead of men, men who set priorities with an overwhelming lack of consideration for the fact that women make up more than 60 percent of the total church membership.

In Marxist China, it is believed that women can only truly be free when all of society is liberated. There is a common ideological stance that no feminine agenda can be separated from the whole of society. In other words, feminism should be seen as part of nationalism in China. This view, however, has recently been seriously challenged by reality.

Therefore, we Christian women of China must rise and accept liberation as our own struggle. Women's emancipation is an ongoing process and we certainly have a long way to go both to achieve

greater leadership participation and partnership equality. The liberation of the church women in post liberation China remains a "Continuous Struggle."

The church in China, primarily ruled by an older generation of male leadership, seems not quite ready to accept the changes which will thrust it ahead of encrusted cultural attitudes. Women's full liberation and independence means that men as well as women in the church must first experience a mental shift from the traditional religious values to modern Biblical concepts. Chinese women in general and China's Christian women in particular have a long struggle ahead before they can "hold up half the sky."

As a woman pastor working in a local church, I meet many female parishioners from all walks of life, especially intellectuals. They tearfully share their anguish and pain with me, having no one else to speak with. I find that the influence of traditional culture is so overwhelming that it drains out all energy, preventing women from searching for a positive identity, self-esteem and self-liberation.

Every night, after a day's work, I, too, feel exhausted and I am anxious to do two things: one, to go into God's loving arms for spiritual refreshment and strength so that I may continue my work, and two, to go to bed for a good night's sleep and physical restoration. But no matter how hard it gets, I find meaning in my work. I would like to share four points with you from the perspective of a woman pastor:

First, doing feminist theology within the Chinese church and the Chinese society is an important and significant part of the historical and worldwide movement for women's equality and liberation. This liberation is not only important for women but for the whole of humanity, as it liberates so much of human creativity. It will enable humanity to be much better co-creators with God.

Second, my own experience points to patriarchal elements in both the Chinese culture and the church, and it appears that the two often reinforce each other. As a Chinese woman and a Chinese woman pastor, I must face this double challenge and continuously reassess both our cultural heritage and the Christian faith. I realize

that this is no easy path to follow. As the famous ancient Chinese poet Qu Yuan says, "The road is long and torturous; we have to search above and below." It is far from easy to cast aside the centuries-old cultural substratum that unconsciously influences each Chinese person. In the Chinese church we have not yet even theorized about the rights of women, and the term "feminist theology" is not even a part of our theological vocabulary.

Given the androcentric character of today's church leadership and the strong presence of fundamentalism in the church's membership, I am aware of the risk involved in introducing western feminist theology publicly. Such an attempt on my part may have grave consequences, jeopardizing my future as a minister in the Chinese church. Therefore, facilitating female equality means very slow movement, step by step, with patience, endurance and encouragement.



Third, although Western culture has discussed feminist culture at great length and many Western feminist theologians have written books, is feminist theology still an unfamiliar topic to Chinese Christian women? Though Western theological works such as feminist Biblical hermeneutics provide insights for Chinese Christians, work on feminist theology in the Chinese church must be based on our own concrete solutions. With the exploration of the church's particularity, I must integrate my personal faith experiences with the Chinese cultural, political and economic systems.

My experience tells me that today one of the biggest problems is that many women in the church accept the idea that they are inferior. Consequently, the most important question may not involve the power structures or the patriarchal system of church government. The greatest challenge may be how to deal with the women of the church ourselves.

Finally, through God's strength, I am helping women Christians develop their consciousness as women Christians who have the God-given vocation of bringing about greater equality between men and women both in church and in society. I believe awakened women can bring their special gifts and insights to enrich the church's understanding of the Bible, of Jesus and Godself. Today women constitute more than 60 percent of the church's membership. Unless their issues are addressed, the church will not be able to reach its goals of developing the "Three-Selves."¹

I hope that this experience of Christian feminism becomes a modest beginning to a lifelong search for a Chinese feminist theology. A feminist perspective is serious business and must not be considered a trend or passing fashion. I believe it will have long-lasting effects that will benefit the church as a community of women and men working in partnership for Christ. A feminist theology can be a valuable spiritual tool for the upbuilding of the church. It will in some way benefit the women and ultimately the men as well. My hope is that this vision has been Spirit-led, and that I will find colleagues in China who will share my excitement for a feminist theology.

1. The Three-Self Movement, begun in 1950 by Protestant church leaders in China, seeks to make the church truly indigenous and Chinese through self-administration, self-support and self-propagation of the gospel. From *Protestant Christianity in China*, a publication of the China Christian Council. (editor's note.)

Reprinted from "The Place of Women in the Church in China," by Reverend Gao Ying in *Decade Link*, a publication of the Women's Programme, Justice, Peace and Creation Unit, World Council of Churches, Geneva, Switzerland, Number 15, 1994.

Paper delivered at the Friends of the Church in China Conference, July 1993, High Leigh, England. Rev. Gao Ying is an ordained pastor at Cheung Wen Men Church in Beijing.

A MILESTONE OF FEMINIST THEOLOGY IN JAPAN

by Hisako Kinukawa

Discovery of new theological ideas often comes out of encounters with people. As a Japanese woman, encounters with women from Asian countries as well as from Euro-American countries have implied many things: awakening of our place as being oppressors; experiencing solidarity as women who have been suppressed under Confucian teachings as well as patriarchal traditions; empowering moments for envisioning the future together as we recover body and mind as our own. Both body and mind have long been neglected and negated simply because we are women, and these encounters have led to an expansion of our territory of life both physically and spiritually.

I would like to reflect on my theological journey by focusing on my work with a San Francisco Theological Seminary (SFTS) Doctor of Ministry group, which began in the summer of 1993 in Tokyo for women in Asian countries. The plan had been discussed since 1991 while I was in the same program finishing my Dissertation Project in Berkeley, California. One of the major issues we discussed was the place to hold the first session. My spontaneous reaction to the suggestion to hold it in Tokyo, where we actually had it, was very negative in two ways: first, it is extraordinarily expensive for any foreigners to stay in Tokyo and second, I assumed it would be

extraordinarily difficult to find a place for the group to study and stay when I thought of the very male-oriented theological situation in Japan and the very small support for feminist theology given by churches. My concern was heightened as I thought of the fact that the number of Christians in Japan is less than one percent of the total population.

After a long time given to discussion and thinking, I was persuaded to invite the group to Tokyo after I reached the conclusion that it could have an epoch-making theological significance to hold such a program in our context. It seemed, however, almost impossible to execute. Theologically, the program could make a big impact upon seminaries which had, of course, no curriculum in feminist theology and only a few books on feminist theology in their libraries. In addition, the program might be a support for the few feminist theologians scattered all over the country struggling against patriarchal church life. Finally, a center for a network of women engaged in feminist theology could be developed. Another woman graduate of the program at SFTS and a staff member of the women's desk of the National Council of Churches of Japan (NCCJ) and I were responsible for developing the strategy for the program.

Discussions about the project with male professors at International Christian University (ICU), at the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Japan and at Tokyo Union Theological Seminary (all of which are located on the same complex), gradually developed a certain level of understanding, as they began to accept the idea of the program and began showing some interest. Libraries of the two schools asked us to provide our bibliographies on feminist theology and they bought most of the books we recommended. Fortunately we were able to obtain some financial support from the World Day of Prayer donation of the year through the women's desk of NCCJ for the women participants. Women with whom we talked were far more appreciative of the program than men, and welcomed it. Through the many contacts I had to make, I felt that the theological arena began to acknowledge the need to listen to voices of women.

The group consisted of three Filipinos, six Koreans and five Japanese when we met on the ICU campus for four weeks in June,

1993. Three graduates of the program, one from Korea, Sook-Ja Chung, and two from Japan, Yoshiko Issiki and myself, worked as conveners, and three American feminist theologians, Letty Russell, Katharine Sakenfeld and Shannon Clarkson, worked as faculty.

The group met five days a week for sessions exploring feminist theology, discerning what methodologies might be available for doing feminist theology, and deciding what hermeneutics may be employed to interpret biblical texts from a feminist perspective, thus enabling us to create our own feminist theologies. Before our study, each national group took turns leading morning worship services. There a diverse spirituality of life emerged in quite different forms, including action, singing, dancing, stories, drawing and liturgy, and in unique ways as women with different experiences shared their lives together. Encounters with women from different countries, cultures, backgrounds and personal histories, listening to stories and experiences of each woman, and giving social, political and cultural analyses to each story and experience, each woman seemed to go through three steps of identifying who they are: identity as a non-person, as a subject, and as being part of a community. In each step, there were moments of discovery, which I name immersion and emergence experiences, mediated by a sense of transformation which accompanied each step.



Almost all the women of Asia have their theological backgrounds immersed in "God" defined by male perspectives and experiences. They, via discovery of conflicts between themselves and "God," become dubious about the theology implanted in them. Sharing experiences as the oppressed, marginalized or neglected gave them a strong motivation to move from being passive in defining God, Christ and discipleship. As they moved to the second step of

immersion in a new image of "God" who works in the lives of women, they began to find and define "God" as being among women, supporting, befriending and empowering them. They declared the male-oriented absolutism in theology must be rejected, and the definition of discipleship that emphasizes women's sacrifice and devotion to men must be transformed.

As we discover ourselves defining our "God" and naming new theological ideas about Christ, sacrifice and suffering, and cross and resurrection from a woman's perspective, we begin to realize we are creating a new community of faith, advocating for those who are the minority in our societies, the marginalized in social classes, the poor in economic and cultural situations and the powerless in political conflicts. Thus the second emergence appears. We become more comfortable doing theology and more at ease with social analysis from our own perspective. As we begin to define more closely who we are in a new community of faith, women of Asia find ourselves immersed in "God" working through multi-religious contexts.

It is a new discovery that I, though I have lived as a Christian for 30 years, have my primary religious foundation/orientation in traditional religious heritage and praxis, which cannot be named as belonging to just one religion; rather it is the mixture of all the religions that have existed in Japan for more than 1500 years, where Christianity has but 200 years of history. It is almost impossible to distinguish which part of my existence or praxis is based on which religion. My life itself consists of spirituality nurtured by those multi-religions of Buddhism, Shintoism, Confucianism and others. Therefore my feminist liberation theology as a member of a Christian community of faith cannot be free from the rich spirituality of those religions. Based on a discovery of "God" as revealed in a person who has grown in multi-religious soil, most women in Asia grow multi-logue within themselves as well as among women with multi-religious backgrounds. Having multi-logues with other religions or religionists does not mean to become syncretic, but to be enriched by their spirituality.

As we participate in the community of faith with an acknowledgment of our multi-logue environment we also realize that

the religions and their spirituality are very much alike in their patriarchal structures and teachings. Women of any religion have suffered from subservient roles and non-person positions. Thus we are driven into yet another emergence process of creating new emancipatory theologies of women from a very critical stance. We are also challenged to create a horizon for opening a new inter-religious and inter-cultural multi-logue which enables us to live in our liberating feminist theology.

Thus action-reflection/immersion-emergence faith praxis in our own contexts will lead us to re-think church traditions and re-interpret biblical texts from women's perspectives. Commitment to feminist liberation theology has led me onto an unexpected path of discovering new concepts of God, which must have long been in women's lives and minds, yet were neglected. This commitment has led to an encounter rich with a spirituality that has been nurtured in other religions and to associating myself with the oppressed who are fighting against the powers-that-be. Such praxis of faith has engendered a question of how to transform the power-to-be into the power-to-be-with or to-be-shared. I have moved from immersion to emergence with my Asian sisters and those of other faiths and places. I continue to journey in multi-logue, working for transformation, and seeking, with them and within myself, the energy to continue the work.

It may be too early to give a conclusive description of the session's impact on the churches and theological arena in Japan. Yet it is also true that some transformation has already become visible. First of all, the rise of interest in feminist theologians is notable. There have been more groups, churches, and Christian schools which held meetings where feminist theologians have been invited as lecturers. My own opportunities to lecture on feminist theology and biblical interpretation from a feminist perspective have increased enormously. It should also be noted that more church programs and worship liturgies are being planned by women.

There have been more articles in relation to feminist theology found in Christian journals in the last two years. Another book I wrote on feminist theology in Japanese was accepted by the publisher with few editorial changes regarding content.

Though there are still few feminist theologians employed as full time faculty by theological seminaries, more schools may open their doors to courses on feminist theology. At seminaries, the number of women students has increased and the number of those women who are interested in feminist theology has also multiplied. In addition to the five women who began their D.Min. program, two more Japanese women and an American woman who has been working in Japan have decided to join another section in Geneva of the International Feminist D.Min. group for women which began here in Tokyo.

At Tokyo Women's Christian University where I teach theology, a course in women's studies was offered last year for the first time. I was asked to take part and speak on feminist theology. I had a similar experience when a course on peace issues was offered at International Christian University. Now I have been invited to teach a course at Japan Lutheran Theological Seminary this coming fall. Though the course is called "Views on Relationships of Men and Women," the request for such a course shows much interest in women's perspectives.

The Christian women's networks which have been working on various issues have been empowered by the increased stature of feminist theology. I also hope that as the number of women who get academic training in feminist theology increases, the networks among us will be strengthened. In my perspective, it will not be too long before we form some sort of feminist theological academic association.

KOREAN WOMAN JESUS: DRAMA WORSHIP

by Soo-Chul Chang,
Hyun-Sook Kim,
and Sook-Ja Chung

*translated into English
by Sook-Ja Chung*



여성교회

Korean Women Church

INTRODUCTION

Today we give birth to Korean Woman Jesus. And we will use a Korean traditional playground dramatic style throughout the worship service. What we are doing today is just like Jesus who did not follow the law of the sabbath.

We, Women Church . . . practice a type of worship in which everybody can participate in the preaching and blessing together, and where people sit in a circle. We try to relate to our reality, and our situations of today, and listen to the voices of the least in our society.

Our practice is rooted in Jesus' declaration of a sabbath which exists for people. We are working to establish a church which truly follows Jesus. We are women who have been oppressed for 5000 years, so we stand on the side of the oppressed. We are women who have been and are forced to serve within the hierarchical structure of churches, and so we will work to overcome those hierarchies. We are the women who can become pregnant and bear life, so we will continue to hold life precious.

It is under these convictions that we establish the mission of Women Church today.

THREE VIGNETTES OF THE TEMPTATIONS

A Korean woman faces three temptations to deny her wholeness and abandon her own liberation.

Proclamation in the Voice of Woman Jesus:

God! You give us your spirit for mission, but we who were born as women experience frustration and despair. However, God asks us to stand up, and not fall down in this despairing world. So we will stand up to follow your will. Let us overcome the temptation before us by going forward with women's liberation and human liberation.

Temptation 1: By Father

Father:

What? Human liberation? That is your opinion. Ok! Let's discuss it. If you want to work for people's liberation, you need to solve your own problem first. Let's talk about your marriage. You have already become 30 years old and you are not yet married. Do you think is it right? When you meet a man to marry, raise your children and make your home happy with your husband's money, that is real human liberation, isn't it? Then why do you want to escape marriage?

Ok! I will agree with you that man and woman have to live equally. If it is true, you must find the man whom you select and create an equal relationship in the life of your marriage. Then you can achieve your dream of human liberation, because other people will see your married life and follow you.

Prayer of Daughter:

God! Hear my prayer. My father is worried for me, but that is a temptation for me. God! I could not live as a whole person from the moment of my mother's sigh when she bore me as a daughter. I did not have any chance to do those things which all sons could do. When I tried to practice my dream, I was

scalded and disgraced because I am a woman. We are called human beings, but nobody accepts us as human beings. We are ignored and treated as disabled. People say man and woman can become one through marriage. However, the reality is not the same. A man could be recognized as a human being by himself, a woman could be recognized only as man's breast, being with a man, and through a man. No. It is not right. I believe that God never created man and woman like that. Therefore if we marry in a way that destroys God's will of creation, we will become slaves. God! You taught me what it is to be a real human being, so guide me to fight against the power of oppression.

Temptation 2: By the Owner and a Woman Colleague of a Company

Company Owner:

I know that our company grew this much because laborers like Miss Kim have worked sacrificially and hard. However, do you know what kind of time it is today? It is the age of international competitiveness now. It is a question of whether the company lives or dies. So we have to be selective to live, don't you think? Endure a little bit more. We do not have the energy to think of the issues you raised such as daycare for children, promotion of women workers, the illegality of 28 year-old compulsory retirement, sexual harassment by male leaders etc.

Woman Colleague:

Sister, come here. Aren't you tired of raising those issues? I think that the president will support you financially only if you stop doing so. Make money, go to a department store and buy some nice clothes . . . Also, if you have eye surgery you might look more beautiful! Make yourself better with the money. Our president will listen to you because he is kind to women. You never care about your appearance, so you are discredited more.

Prayer of a Woman Worker:

God, Look at our desperation. The custom of patriarchal oppression over women expanded from family to society and throughout the whole country. Due to the huge economic transformation into capitalism our struggle to live as human beings fell behind. And the commercialization of women has made us give up being sincere mothers who bring new life into being. Are we invaluable beings or commodities? Where can we find true partners who will treat us and suffer with us as equal beings? We believe there is the dehumanization not only of women but also of men in the structure of inequality. Oh, God! Give me strength to cut the chain of the dehumanized inequality.

*Temptation 3: by Male Pastor**Male Pastor:*

Look at me. Don't think that I don't know anything. I have my way of thinking. Anyway, how could the church establishment be changed in a few days by a few people? Many people overcame their struggles with a lot of traditions, fighting sacrificially against heresy to establish the present day church. What shall you accomplish by suddenly jumping like this? I cannot understand at all how you think that you can turn over the church tradition all at once. This tradition has been followed by all churches until now. Not only me, but also God may not accept your attitude. See! Because you waited, the issue of women's ordination was accepted. And when do we ignore isolated poor people or women? The church has always preached the word of God, and practiced the love of Jesus. You cannot just change the church as you like. It is heresy, don't you see? So, be quiet, pray hard and wait with endurance, then you will be rewarded. Praise be to God!

Prayer of Female Minister:

O God, How long shall I wait? And for what shall I pray? Shall I wait until all churches in this world are furnished with gold and silver? Until our church becomes the teraphim of patriarchal culture? Until the churches become the secure place for the rich and the powerful? We are ready for service and sacrifice. Yet, for whom and for what do we work? Is it really to practice God's justice and peace and to follow Jesus' love? We, now need to find the right focus for our service and sacrifice. If our focus is not God's way, we should not carry on even though we will be praised and adored as angels. Make our feet powerful, and give us the will to decide and walk the way of God's mission by following Jesus.

Proclamation of Woman Jesus, in Four Voices:

(sounds of drum)

Jesus 1: My heart is breaking with worry. Is this possible by myself?
Isn't it like throwing eggs on stone? God! If this is my way to go, if this is my cup to drink, I will receive and drink it.

Jesus 2: I am surprised to find a woman worrying just like me. This is not just my fruitless struggle. Hello! I have the same worry as you. Let's go together.

Jesus 1: Is it true? Ah! I am glad and feel strength. Let's go, together.
We are partners.

Jesus 2: Yes.

Jesus 3: Oh, God! I cannot do this any more. I cannot fight this lonely struggle. I am too tired.

Jesus 1: Hey, be courageous. We are your friends. Let's go together.
Just as the Hebrew slaves cut the chain of slavery and started

to find the promised land of freedom. Let's be the partners who open the day of liberation in this land.

Jesus 3: What a wonderful thing to meet you! God did not throw us away. Yes, You are right. Let's stand up together.

Woman Jesus 4 was listening to their conversations and follows them shouting out.

Jesus 4: Hello, I will go with you. While I was listening to your conversations, my heart was moved and changed. You are right. I have been living as a slave, but I will not go back to be a slave anymore. Instead I will go with you.

Jesus 3: We will all stand up to watch and protect God's order of creation. We will participate in the mending of creation as true mothers who love all lives, and as God's daughters who follow the life of Jesus of Nazareth. We all become partners to walk this same road.

Everybody agrees with Jesus 3 and sings together in a declaration of action.

excerpted from "Korean Woman Jesus" Drama Worship on the Fifth Anniversary of the Establishment of Women Church, October 20, 1994.

THE BHIKKSHU FROM LA AT OLEMA

by Inna Jane Ray

*In reply to the question from a guest at the retreat center:
"How shall I renounce the Wandering-On?"*

When woodsmoke flavors October dusk
and families gather indoors before curtains are drawn
I turn to the comfort of sleeping warm
in a cold night shaken with rain

Launched among patterns, I paddle quilts
I bob with yellow leaves bobbing in the gutters
streaming away from the rooftops to the road
a pilgrim raft on the waters of the world
floating a bridge among alien islands,
even here in the stucco canyons and concrete channels
where I did not know I would be wandering
now these forty years. Is this the Way?

I remember granite splintering under snow,
and thunder hammering the stony air
to split the avalanche that mills the bones of my ancestors.
How small I stood in the gorge
so still, so small, and hope is small
that I will stand there again in this lifetime,
under the clobbered peaks, where begin
all the roads that rise and rinse away in the rain.
In my heart I climb the cobbled stair to my door
set in the axel of the world, held in the streaming-on.

Is this the Way? It was the beauty of the world
that bound me to the wheel. Even here —
as a refugee on the rim of the western shore,
strolling at evening with refugees native-born,
blue shadows pour from palm trees and soften
the interminable asphalt distance over which we hurtle
horizontally at the speed of a bad fall,
and stolen fountains flooding the lawns
slow our pace and cool our fever.

Even here — dodging skateboarders and pushing
that button in the pole beside the crosswalk
while we wait for the signal to change

small steps
bring the mountains closer.

RIFFING ABOUT THE RIM: Breakfast with Chung Hyun Kyung

by Kathryn Poethig

Prof. Chung Hyun Kyung, an Asian feminist liberation theologian from Korea, spoke at the Pacific School of Religion's Earl Lectures in January, 1995. Victoria Rue, my partner, and I had the delightful task of entertaining her for a breakfast or two. This is our casual, wide-ranging conversation.

Hyun Kyung: I have two questions. First, I want to hear from you why you are here; why in this specific time and place? Second, we have been in this spiritual and political movement. How can we bring about this change? What is your learning after all these years?

Kathryn: Why do you think you are here?

HK: I got an answer from my shaman. He asked me, "Why are you here?" I thought he was asking, "Why are you in my house?" I said I wanted direction, but he said, "No, no why are you *here*?" Then he said, "I know why you are here. You came to this world to show the face of God; you came here to bring out beauty, but you don't have much time left because you are going to die young. You were enlightened in your last life so you didn't come back to seek enlightenment. You have a mission to do something. And after that work is finished, you don't need to stay here anymore." He didn't know I was a theologian. It just stuck in my heart: what does it mean to show the face of God? It makes sense in my own way as a theologian. I want to show what it means to be whole with my whole being, not just my talk.

KP: I've heard that the European-derived population is only 11 percent of the whole world, but western civilization imagines itself as 90 percent. My notion of why I'm here in the world has shrunk to an appropriate size — not a 90 percent. I'm here to do only the work I'm here to do. I often feel like a tourist and I can give people that vision; we are all transients. We're editing a collection of stories about being "out" in the church¹. In my piece, "Conjuring Home," I talk about multiple exiles and my own as a missionary kid in the Philippines and a lesbian in the Presbyterian church. Since I've worked with Southeast Asian refugees, this subject has been close to me for a long time. Exile is a condition of inexpressible loneliness, but it can also be one of great commitment.

HK: In the same situation people make different choices. I was always wondering, for example, why even though my husband and I started out in the student movement together, he made a choice for fundamentalism while I made this choice.

KP: The world is mottled with possibilities and limitations. I think of Gerard Manley Hopkins's words, "Glory to God for dappled things." We need to celebrate a dappled God. I think our mission in the world is to mingle, not to keep separate and pure, or to expect certainty. When I watch my sister Johanna paint, she mingles purple, green and yellow when she's painting a face. How many colors go into making us look "normal" brown, black, or white skinned people. This makes me think about a conversation with a Jewish friend about Tikkun Olam — healing, binding and refracting our multiple shards of light . . .

HK: . . . like a kaleidoscope . . .

KP: . . . so we all show aspects of life that are beautiful and sad and stirring.

HK: So, the second question — how do we change, how do we live in the movement? I get so old considering all these issues of globalization and what you are doing with transnational theories. OK, so we have theories, but how can we change? How can we really challenge GATT with no focus. How could we do it, without having a war? I don't know, what do we need to do?

KP: The old solutions are not effective anymore. I've spent many years doing human rights work, especially Philippine solidarity. But I don't think the techniques we used then are very effective anymore. Your point in your lecture to "act global, act local, think global, think local" is a good one. How can we show that people live two places at once? I went to Cambodian apartments in Oakland when I was working with boys on probation; they were all updated on Cambodia through videos that people would bring back. It's not just global-local, it's local-local. Local here and local somewhere else.

HK: I've talked with Latin American theologians. The 1980s was the lost decade of Latin America. They didn't know what to do, with the so-called collapse of socialist countries, and the change to civilian governments. There are no longer military governments, but every Latin American country is following the capitalist model. It's a more seductive battle. And look at Asia. Asia is the biggest market now; money is around everywhere, and I don't know how we can really make a change because naive kinds of utopianism like socialism will never work again.

KP: It means that on a strategic level we must be more sophisticated about our alliances and our activities. One example: the seventeen-year J.P. Stevens strike. It was finally resolved when the religious community got behind it, and organizers targeted boycotts on retail stores and began a sophisticated corporate campaign. You know, stockholder activism. It was an 80's strategy that used management against itself. We need new subversive activities in this era because power is both more elusive and more hegemonic. We can't use an 80's strategy in the 90s.

HK: Also, in Korea, these people's movement strategies don't work any more.

KP: People have tried to organize workers in Silicon valley, the computer industry. They refused to be organized; their benefits were too good. I think that structural modernity is sweeping across the world.

HK: It means we need enormous creativity and persistence. I've been very sad because so many of my Korean women friends in the

movement have been shattered, physically, spiritually, emotionally. They didn't know what to do. Finally, they came to me because I'm a theologian. They despised religion and the spiritual stuff. Now they ask me, Hyun Kyung, you're a theologian, what should we do, where is the hope?

KP: So what did you say?

HK: I don't have an answer either, but maybe we start with healing ourselves. So we began chi exercises, to make our bodies healthy again and to open our heart. This is a time to go inward. Most of them are very sick, with so many years in the movement.

KP: I think what you offer is not to forget the world while we're healing ourselves.

HK: That's what is missing in California. You try to heal yourself independent of the world. It's an illusion!

KP: But isn't it also a problem in Korea that you're becoming affluent so fast? I would think that it's more difficult to be an activist. The sense of urgency and the obvious enemy has changed, partly because the government has become more democratized. Tell me, how is an affluent Korea going to look different than Japan?

HK: In less than ten years, maybe not so different. Do you know what I discovered? People in the high class share a common culture — jewelry, fancy parties, first class seats, cable TV.

KP: I was in a Beijing hotel watching "V" TV. Have you seen it, it's MTV for Asia — Hong Kong, Manila, Bombay. Very high production value, in English, with Asian rap and hip hop stars. In Beijing! Who was watching it? It's so tiring to keep up with all these developments!

HK: This fast changing world has produced a lot of mystics.

KP: Theories of post modernity describe this world. Like Fredric Jameson's "cultural logic of late capitalism." It's a logic of fragmentation, hyperspace, pastiche, unruly capital and commodification. But sometimes even the theory seems empty. More theory . . .

HK: . . . without any answers. That's what is true about post

modernism. They have good questions, but no answers. It really describes the surface — but what is behind all this? Mammon, mammon is behind all this. The package has been changed, but not really deep things. The role of the theologian is to dip into that well, not the surface.

KP: People are so thirsty.

HK: Even I don't have much to give, but in my small world people just grab it. I think it shows how empty people's lives are.

KP: And when people are empty — this the danger of modernity, this emptiness, people will accept authority, easy answers.

HK: Like fascism . . .

KP: . . . and the religious right, you accept these packages that simplify good and evil.

HK: I always make the distinction between the emptiness of Zen and the emptiness of modernity. They are two kinds of lightness — the unbearable lightness of being of modernity and the delightful lightness of Zen, so light you can be fully there, because your emptiness is so light. You know that movie, "The Unbearable Lightness of Being," what I saw in it was nihilism, intense loneliness, promiscuity, not even a sense of young experimentation. We must engage this cultural analysis. Why is this modernity so empty? What is a response to this nihilism? Maybe it's Zen emptiness. In Korea we say, combine cold with cold and hot with hot.

In my own life, I have felt so empty, so lonely. I would have rather died. After that stage, I felt different. OK, if I can kill myself, then maybe I can live like that too, embrace the emptiness. I love the story of the Zen master. When I was suffering during my divorce, Christian friends were afraid for me. They encouraged me, "If you just go through this, you will see the light." But when I went to the Zen master to tell him how miserable I was, he listened to me, motionless, and said, "So, what's new?" I was suffering so much; I was shocked! He just said, "That is the first noble truth of Buddhism: life is suffering. You're just experiencing life. Why do you think you're so special?" He just shattered my drama. I discovered this: practitioners of Zen never get hooked by my drama. Christians swallow up the

drama — all these sufferings for the sake of Christ. In Christianity, we say, “You’re so special, God loves you! You are the chosen one.”

KP: Christians need Zen medicine! *[laughter]*

HK: Christian addiction can only be healed by Zen medicine! *[laughter]* Christians have so much symbolism and meaning in suffering. God’s redemption is in suffering; He killed his only son. In my Earl lecture I said, “You guys want to have an electric chair execution for this woman who killed her sons by drowning them because she wanted to get married. Why don’t you execute your God? He sent his son to get tortured and killed for a great cause. So, execute your God in the electric chair. You wear all these crosses. I don’t understand you. It’s a model of torture. Think of what you are doing — what if you would wear electric chair earrings, electric chair necklace, and in front of the church, you put an electric chair!”

Because we suffer we need celebration. Like Victoria said this morning, let’s not just focus on “Life is suffering.” How about a garden theology where life is celebration! Because we suffer, we need celebration. People who know how to party are oppressed people, like my Latino friends in the US. When I go to these Anglo parties, oh those people just hang around and drink wine and talk. This is not my kind of party — I need to use my body!

KP: When was the last time you were laughing and rolling on the floor? *[laughter]* But back to theory, Hyun Kyung! I’ve been asking this question because of transnational theory. Do you think that we can have a liberation theology that encompasses both sides of the Pacific Rim?

HK: Maybe...

KP: What do you think it would look like?

HK: To be very honest, we have to have very deep analysis. We are benefiting from new capital, but what is the nature of that benefit? I believe in karma — that what goes around comes around. The benefit that someone receives right now; will it be a benefit in the long run? Maybe we can write a book — different sides of fences, different sides of the ocean. It might be very interesting if we are really honest how we benefit, how we lose from this globalization.

And what can we do together.

KP: I really think that it's time to consider this.

HK: Like a global theology — but not a universal theology. Just one issue of human survival at a time.

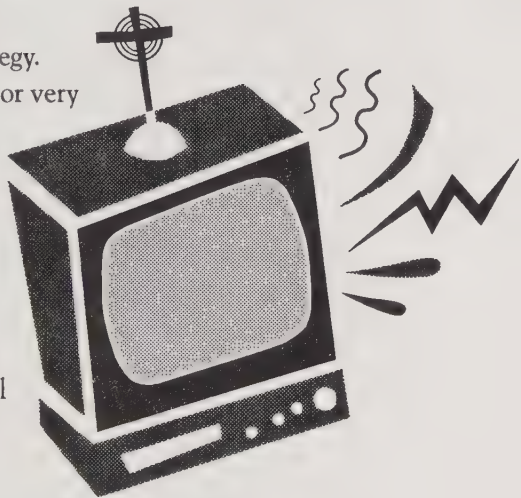
KP: The economic and geopolitical alignments are already occurring. How are we preparing for it? Like the movement of people — Samoans in L.A., Filipinos in Singapore, Japanese in Brazil . . .

HK: . . . or trafficking of women. People have this illusion that we still have national boundaries, it doesn't mean much because our children will not grow up in one nation. We live in the CNN-ization of the world.

KP: What do we do? Resist CNN culture?

HK: I think we cannot fight CNN. It is there. I want a proactive force. We should develop an alternative that is just as compelling and encompassing as CNN. It is much better than fighting. I don't want to say, "Oh, you are not good." I just want to say, "Hey, I am better!"
[laughter] It's a much better strategy. I've discovered when very good or very bad people make a mark, it takes a lifetime to respond to them.

I don't want to be anyone's footnote. My life is a bible; it is written everyday. Why do I have to go back to the old book? To a point it's good — full of inspiration and memory. But also, how limiting. They didn't write anything about CNN, transnational corporations, e-mail . . .



KP: . . . fax revolutions, artificial insemination. This is where Donna Haraway's "Cyborg Manifesto" is so thrilling and ironic. I read it and thought, yes, this is our manifesto for rewriting our gospel. These are the conditions we live with! A mixed-up, unimaginable

techno-human world.

HK: It's very exciting because it's like a shift that's coming loose, the breakdown of the ideologies of modernity. But if the power of modernity was force, the power of post modernity is seduction. All these smiles: if you want this, it will make you so happy. This is really an advanced form of mammon.

KP: But then, you're suggesting that our resistance is to smile bigger?

HK: Our resistance is to be sexier! *[laughter]*

KP: We were talking about answering emptiness with Zen emptiness, maybe it's abundance with another kind of abundance.

HK: Our strategy for a transnational theology — being sexier — because people respond to life. Madonna is much more interesting than any minister. We need theological Madonnas.

KP: Who knows, maybe Madonna will end up a theological Madonna. You can't predict her. The next thing you know, she'll have a mystical experience and become an evangelist!

HK: I think Madonna will get enlightenment soon, because she's tried everything already. Nothing left to do. I think she's bored.

KP: So we have to pray for her enlightenment.

HK: We must have sexy resistance . . .

KP: Maybe you should ask Madonna to help you produce the movie you want to do on Korean comfort women. She understands sexual labor. *[laughter]* That would be real sexy transnational alliance!

1. Janie Spahr, Kathryn Poethig, Selisse Berry, Melinda McLain, eds., *Called Out: Voices and Gifts of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Presbyterians*, Gaithersburg, Maryland, Chi Rho Press, 1995.

JACOB'S ANGELS

in the Land of Snows

by Angela Graboys

MEMORY IS NOT LINEAR

Jewish memory calls on us to remember a time before we were born. We are asked to envision faces we have never seen, but of whose lineage, according to tradition, we bear imprints. Our liturgy, texts and history assume a collective Jewish memory, traveling up and down the ladder of vertical linear time. Yosef Yerushalmi argues that Jewish survival is directly linked to the evocative power of memory. It is as if our identities as Jews stem from remembering past lives, telescoped into lunar cycles of ritual and repetition. Maybe it is true, as Jewish legend teaches, that before we were born we knew the whole Torah, but upon being kissed by an angel at the time of birth, we forgot our prior knowledge.¹ Living takes on a subterranean dimension as we attempt to access what is barely forgotten. The thinnest membrane separates consciousness from a collective past.

I am asked to remember a time before I was born, to imagine faces through prayer and text — yet I am haunted by the intuition that memory does not only move in a linear vertical direction. It may also be horizontal. Can my memory also be triggered by a history not my own, by faces not in my mythic or genetic family tree? Because I was the Other in the land of Egypt.

I am called to remember, to be mindful of all who are Other. For me as a Jew, the term Holocaust evokes a consciousness of past, present, and future genocides, a vertical relation to my lineage and

identity, and a horizontal movement towards the faces of others. I am drawn to those Tibetan and Chinese dissidents who feel compelled to connect the Holocaust to their own experience. I find Harry Wu's analogy to the point:

If people want to see a real-life Schindler's List, they need only to go to one of China's forced labor prison camps, where more than ten million people are being held today . . . Americans remain outraged over the Nazis' forced labor camps, and Stalin's. Why haven't the American people and world leaders, President Clinton among them, condemned the Chinese camps?²

Similarly, Tibetan exile Kunzang Yuthok reflects:

The continuance of MFN (Most Favored Nation) status is the present day equivalent of the Allies' territorial concessions to Hitler on the eve of World War II and their accommodations to Stalin at Yalta.³

These analogies in no way diminish the record of Nazi atrocity; they trigger a memory: The world as moral bystander in the face of the 12 million concentration camp murders, the 40 million killed in Stalinist Russia, and the 40-80 million "unnatural deaths" in China under Mao.⁴ I see all the toys and clothes in K-Mart stamped Made in China — and my mind makes a kind of surreal collage — I see faces. I imagine cheap toys stamped Made in Auschwitz.

Hindsight imposes the most hypocritical of double standards. Films like *Schindler's List* and museums like the Holocaust Memorial provide a false sense of closure, a moral smugness. History is polished into marble and language distances us from urgency. The whole discourse surrounding uniqueness vs. universality of the six million Jews murdered masks political and religious concerns: Who are the guardians of memory? Perhaps hierarchy and genocide in relation to human suffering should be mutually exclusive concepts. Fear of revisionism cannot set the terms of a discourse which needs to go much deeper. At stake is the subtlety of thought itself, the causality of evil, violence, and spectrum. By spectrum I mean: Were there any identifiable human behaviors during the Nazi mass murders, during the world's sanctioned silence, that have emerged again and again?

WHY JEWS SHOULD CARE ABOUT TIBET: CONSTRUCTING AN ETHIC OF SOLIDARITY

My original conception of this paper was to draw bridges and boundaries between Jews and Tibetans. Culturally, aesthetically, and politically, there are points of confluence: A minuscule community with ancient spiritual traditions confronting their own annihilation and forced diaspora. Also, Israel's active arms and technology sales to China implicate many in the Jewish community.⁵

I proposed this paper with the intention of arguing that Jewish identity was intimately linked to Tibetan survival based on our respective political histories. Yet my thinking on this issue has been radically altered, due to a remark made by a Jewish colleague. She feared I would not be able to "convince Jews it was in their self-interest to care about Tibetans." Why did this utilitarian presumption disturb me so? Do we operate in a world where self-interest determines our behaviors and serves as our moral compass? Perhaps the very questions: "What is to be gained? To what advantage?" reflect something rather sinister in all of us. What is the connection between self-interest and morally neutral bystanders in the face of reprehensible crimes?⁶



Words like holocaust and genocide, concepts like the appropriation of language and history, must be framed in ethics, and it must be an ethic void of self-interest. Otherwise, this discourse and all academic debate on this issue becomes an excuse to do nothing. Our language and explorations into the nuances of words and their ownership unconsciously reflect the very utilitarian biases which place us well within the moral bystander category. I am suggesting that self-interest renders all of us morally culpable and sheds light on the very causality, in the sense of a continuum of genocide.

There is a primordial reflection of authenticity, a source of ethics, a human motivation which unmasks self-interest and peels away the

newspeak of language. Why should Jews care about Tibet? Why should any of us care about the Other? It is all in the *face*.

A RETURN TO THE FACE AS WINDOW TO THE MORAL IMAGINATION

I turn to Levinas's image of the face as a call, the face as straight-away ethical, as the ground of human responsibility. It is the face in its blessed irreducibility which demands a response. The face, capable of breathing, speaking, witnessing, and judging, can save us. Inscribed in the face — in its at once stark and exquisite vulnerability — the injunction: Thou shalt not kill. For Levinas the face-to-face encounter shatters the confines of ego, and awakens the self to its highest purpose — responsibility. In the face of the Other is the irreducible, the evocation of mortality and infinity. As Levinas states:

The face in its uprightness is what is aimed at "point blank" by death. What is experienced as demand in it certainly signifies a call to giving and serving . . . but above this . . . is the order to not let the Other alone — be it in the face of the inexorable.⁷

The fear for the death of the Other is the basis of responsibility.⁸ I study your face, meet mortality in your gaze, and confront my responsibility. In your face I see traces of God, the culmination of past and present history as well as ultimate potentiality. If I see beyond surface — if I am attentive — your face is a disruption of my ego/my solipsistic world. If I linger on the face, meditating on all the intuitions its power evokes, it is not only in the hope of disturbing academia's babel, but more importantly to break through all of society's bureaucratic, defacing, and diffusing mechanisms. The work of institutions and the state are distance, the face is proximity. The face is an opening to the moral imagination. There is currently an unbridgeable gap between the term Holocaust and the actual faces. As Elie Weisel states:

I'm sorry I introduced the term Holocaust . . . Today one must ask do you mean the show or the event?⁹

We return to the face — and we are confronted with life — not theory.

In *The Genocidal Mentality*, psychiatrist Robert Lifton argues that for any society to carry out genocide it must offer ethical justifications for its actions. For any state to succeed in murdering large portions of a given population — the citizenry must believe in morally efficacious rationales. This process requires psychic numbing, dissociation, and depersonalization, rendering the Other faceless. “Disassociation can readily entrench itself in an entire population because it is part of the human repertoire of the general psychological capacity of all of us.”¹⁰ For the state to successfully annihilate communities it relies on the natural human propensity to disengage/and detach the Other from the face. Genocide relies on moral bystanders — the average well meaning citizen who cannot face, look, and conceive of the Other. As Zygmunt Bauman explains:

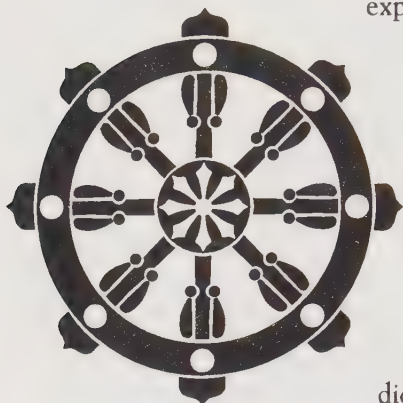
All social organization consists therefore in neutralizing the disruptive and deregulating impact of moral behavior. This effect is achieved through a number of complementary arrangements: (1) Stretching the distance between action and its consequences beyond the reach of moral impulse: (2) exempting some ‘Others’ from the class of potential ‘faces,’ (3) disassembling human objects of action into aggregates of functionally specific traits held separate so that the occasion for re-assembling the face does not arise . . . ¹¹

LEVINAS AND THE DALAI LAMA

At first glance, a Buddhist ethic would share little with Levinas’s phenomenology of the Face and its irreducible alterity, the alterity of the Other. When I look at the Other — that which is irreducible — the integrity of difference dictates that I can never colonialize or appropriate this human for my own ends. Ethics is respect for and dedication to the preservation of precisely what is enigmatic, unfathomable and open-ended in the Other. The dignity of the Other is her irreplaceable uniqueness. The desire to serve, the moral injunction against violence, and feelings of guilt or bad conscience all attest to the self’s moving out of self toward the Other.

Despite the different starting points and definitions, a Buddhist ethic complements Levinas on a key point: The ego of the self, self-interest, and/or any attempt to survive at the expense of the Other must all be subordinated to the self’s *responsibility* for not harming any other.

According to the Dalai Lama — for action to be moral it must be predicated on alleviating the suffering of all beings. Material advantage, utilitarian gain can never be our ends. To be at your expense is not to be at all, to be at your expense is my own destruction.



The objection could be raised:

"Yes-but isn't this also a form of essentializing, a benevolent self interest?" If my being depends on you (because we are, in effect, attached at the hip . . .

I see my reflection in your face!) then it is my self-

preservation instinct which

dictates my altruism. For Levinas,

while the self and the other might share a

partial sameness, they are forever separated by the unbridgeable chasm of alterity. In Buddhist thought there is both a concrete material I or self and an unfathomable non-self. As the Dalai Lama explains:

Attitudes of hatred have an exaggerated thought of the I as their basis, do they not? There is indeed a conventionally posited I — a self that is the doer of actions. However, when we examine the mode of apprehension of the mind . . . we find that we are conceiving of a self-instituting I that is an exaggeration beyond what actually exists.¹²

For Levinas, the self and the other — and for the Dalai Lama, the self and the not-self — can be drawn as distinct circles with some overlap. Though these two schema are different, their respective ethics are based on service, responsibility, and relationality: a movement outside of ego, beyond the I towards "an exorbitant and infinite responsibility for other human beings."¹³

I stress two perspectives which consider ethical self-interest to be an oxymoron to make a simple point: there are thought and action patterns which challenge the causality of Auschwitz, Hiroshima, China's invasion of Tibet, and the human propensity towards violence. There is a relationship between the very propensity towards

“the ends justify the means” and genocide. Survival at all costs — in words and/or actions — is violence. As Levinas states:

In society such as it functions one cannot live without killing, or at least without taking the preliminary steps for the death of someone. Consequently the important question of meaning is not — Why is there something rather than nothing . . . but: do I not kill by being?¹⁴

To view actions descriptively as opposed to prescriptively, to focus on the “is” and not the “ought” is to concede the naturalness of human violence. This concession leads to reification culminating in the production of moral bystanders. We cannot ignore the relationship between words and actions, ideas and politics. *Language* which defaces, manifests itself in psychic numbing, and the injunction Thou Shalt Not Kill vanishes from our moral repertoire. We all know the moral bystander — the one who cannot look the Other in the eye — who sees no strategic gain in accepting responsibility for the Jewish, Tibetan, and/or generic Other. The world’s orphans are faceless. To care about a people so different from one’s own requires an attentiveness, a listening. Tibet is a challenge for Jews; can we build an ethic of solidarity?

POSTSCRIPT

Jewish memory, like Jacob’s angels, travels up and down the ladder of linear time giving history a face. Texts and liturgy elide chronology and yield experience, encounter, testimony. We are preserved and our understanding of diaspora is given countenance through the face of the Hasid, Rabbi Judah ben Baba, speaking through the Talmud. He is a witness not an abstraction; the actual motion, the three dimensional aspect between space and time. *Tractate Sanhedrin* calls upon us to remember:

Once the Wicked Government (of Hadrian in the Second Century) decreed that whoever performed a (rabbinic) ordination should be put to death, and whoever received ordination should be put to death. The city in which the ordination took place was demolished, and the boundaries wherein it had been performed, uprooted. What did Rabbi Judah ben Baba do? He sat between two great mountains. that lay between two large cities . . . and there ordained five elders: Simeon. Rabbi Jose. and Rabbi Eliezer ben Sharnua. (Rabbi Awai adds also

Rabbi Nehemia to the list.) As soon as their enemies discovered them. Rabbi Judah ben Baba urged them: "My children, flee!" They said to him: "What will become of you, Rabbi?" "I lie before them like a stone which none overturn," he replied. It was said that the enemy did not stir from the spot until they had driven three hundred spearheads into his body, making it like a sieve.¹⁵

Jewish memory is evoked through this time travel; the face illumines our moral imagination. The reader responds to a time before she was born. Chronology is transcended. But still the question goes deeper: can my memory — can Jacob's angels — move horizontally?

Can I conceive of the face (across the Other's text) of whose lineage I bear no trace? The Dalai Lama's experience of exile and his peoples' annihilation recalls Jewish memory. He says:

The Panchen Lama was treated with great cruelty by the Chinese authorities and showed his five compatriots permanent marks on his body that had been inflicted during torture.¹⁶

Formal religion has been banned. The only songs allowed are political paeans sung to Chinese tunes. Thousands of monasteries and nunneries have been desecrated.¹⁷

And when the people rose in revolt, which they did on several different occasions after 1959, whole villages were razed, their inhabitants murdered, while tens of thousands of the remaining population were put into prison.¹⁸

Can I remember a people not my own? Jacob's angels move from Egypt and rise like a Phoenix over Auschwitz — but do they go to Tibet, the Land of the Snows?

1. Yosef Yerushalmi, *Zakhor: Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1982, p. 108. Yerushalmi refers to Tractate Niddah and later legends of intuition.

2. *San Francisco Examiner*, April 10, 1994.

3. *Seattle Times*, May 27, 1994
4. *Washington Post*, July 17, 1994
5. *Moment*, February, 1994. China is Israel's third largest arms market—following the U.S. and Western Europe.
6. This is the rationale for MFN, GATT, and free trade at the expense of human rights.
7. Emmanuel Levinas, *Ethics and Infinity: Conversations with Philippe Nemo*, trans. Richard Cohen, Pittsburgh, Duguesne University Press, 1985, p. 119.
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Time*, March 18, 1958.
10. Robert Jay Lifton, *The Genocidal Mentality: Nazi Holocaust and Nuclear Threat*, New York, Basic Books, 1990, pp. 226-227. Note discussions of Tibet in the popular press — there is an abstracting/objectifying move to call Tibetans "a culture" — and accept their geographical location as part of China.
11. Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1989.
12. The Dalai Lama, *The Meaning of Life from a Buddhist Perspective*, trans. and ed. by Jeffrey Hopkins, Boston, Wisdom Publications, 1992, p. 16.
13. *Ethics and Infinity*, p. 3.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 120.
15. Sanhedrin 14a.
16. *Freedom in Exile, The Autobiography of the Dalai Lama*, New York, HarperCollins, 1990, p. 232.
17. *Ibid.* p.235.
18. *Ibid.* p.236.

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Korean Woman Church was founded in 1989. It is a faith community initiated by ecumenical believers with non-church women who share "the life of Jesus Christ with Korean suffering people, especially oppressed women, for their liberation and healing." The group currently meets at the "Women's House for Peace" in Seoul. Rev. Sook-Ja Chung has been the pastor of Korean Woman Church since 1992. She has a D.Min. from SFTS.

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*For all the women who got us there, with
special thanks to Josephine, our travel agent.*

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Co-Editor's Foreward

by Sheri Hostetler

I wasn't in Huairou for the NGO Women's Forum, but I'm quite certain, after co-editing this journal with Victoria Rue, that a part of myself was there. I believe you couldn't be a woman and not, in some sense, have been in China in August of 1995. How could we women at home not have felt the energy of 30,000 grassroots women activists, all packed together in the muggy heat of Huairou, talking, telling stories, singing, sobbing, dancing, roaring? The Spirit generated by such a congregation of powerful women will change — is changing, has already changed — the world.

CWR sponsored a delegation of 29 women¹ to the conference, and 14 of them have shared their experiences of the journey and its aftermath in this scrapbook. Through sermons, speeches, stories, snatches of overheard conversations, poems, letters and journal entries, these women bring home the sense, sights and sounds of the conference. It is our hope as editors that through this pastiche of forms you, too, will catch the spirit of the NGO Women's Forum, the largest gathering of women activists in history.

The journey to Huairou began in 1994 with CWR Advisory Board member Kathryn Poethig and then interim director Marta Vides, who had the vision and enthusiasm to organize a Center delegation. After countless pre-trip meetings, phone calls, solicitations, anxieties (would the visas come in time?) these two women, along with the rest of the delegation, found themselves in Shanghai on Aug. 20, 1995. From there, the group toured China for nine days, "looking at the world through women's eyes" (the theme of

the NGO Forum) before arriving in Huairou, 35 miles outside of Beijing.

NGOs are non-profit or voluntary organizations, and NGO Forums have accompanied each of the four U.N. World Conferences on Women since the first such Conference was held in Mexico City in 1975.² While U.N. Conference delegates are usually "State Department types," Forum attendees are the ordinary, extraordinary women working at the grassroots level to effect change. The delegates at the U.N. conference spent their time hashing out the wording of official documents. In the words of Sherron Courneen: "boring." Necessary, perhaps, but rather dry. Not so the NGO Women's Forum, as you will soon find out from reading this journal. There, women attended cultural events, political protests, dialogues, panel presentations and workshops.

Included among the hundreds of workshops offered were two sponsored by CWR: "Spirit in Action: Lesbians Working in Patriarchal Traditions" and "Celebrating Womanspirit." Two sessions of the "Spirit in Action" workshop were given, due to the first session being completely packed full. Presenters Judith McDaniel, Victoria Rue, Selisse Berry, Sandy Boucher, Barbara Zoloth and Lucinda Ramberg spoke about being lesbian from within their particular faiths, which include Quaker, Roman Catholic, Buddhist, Jewish and Episcopalian traditions. After their presentations, many lesbians from around the world spoke of their struggles also — Catholic women from Europe and the Philippines, a Protestant group from Hong Kong, Buddhist women from Thailand, as well as lesbians in the Ba'hai faith in Bermuda.

All members of the CWR delegation were invited to participate in the second workshop, "Celebrating Womanspirit." Here, the group's intention was to create a ritual that had as few words as possible. Twelve symbols — including a phoenix, moon, hummingbird, dolphin, tree, and lotus — were represented on large painted cloths stretched over round disks. Women entered the space and were asked to identify with one of the symbols, join the group around it in meditation, create a movement for the symbol, and then verbally share with the group on one of these topics: women's power,

suffering, healing from violence, the future of your children, death/rebirth, community, this conference. To conclude, the women danced a traditional Native American dance, led by CWR delegation member Lucinda Nuñez.

While participants in the NGO Forum produced no official documents, they did strive to influence the wording of key U.N. documents, foremost among them the Platform for Action. During the months preceding the U.N. Conference, countries from across the globe identified fundamental obstacles that keep women from realizing their full potential. These joint findings, along with goal and strategies for change, were summarized in a draft version of the Platform for Action. It was this document that 189 governments at the U.N. Conference debated, denounced, amended, and finally approved in September 1995.³

The Platform for Action effectively forms the basis for all “Beyond Beijing” activism, serving as the focus around which women can organize, agitate and transform. World governments will be held accountable to the Platform through monitoring and activism carried out by NGOs, women’s groups and individuals — in other words, women like you and me. In the words of Gertrude Mongela, Secretary General of the U.N. Conference, “The Fourth World Conference on Women is concluded, but the real work of transforming words into action is only now beginning. Disseminate the Platform on your return home to your countries and let the message be loud and clear: Action now.” In this journal, Elizabeth Fisher reports on how organizations in California are doing just that — and, in particular, how CWR is participating in this process by bringing its unique contribution to “Beyond Beijing” activism. Women of the CWR delegation are each finding their own way of bringing Beijing home.

For those of us who were not members of the delegation, a part of each of us also went to Beijing. And what part of us came back? How will we bring Beijing home to where we are, right here, right now?

1. Five of these women, Jaime Burnett, Linda Frankel, Melissa and Pat Weaver, and Diana Wynne, joined us for the tour, and we welcomed them as part of our delegation.

2. An article written by Susan Halcomb Craig provides interesting background on the differences between the 1985 and 1995 conferences: "Common wisdom holds that in 1985 at the NGO Forum in Nairobi the global women's movement was born, and that in 1995 it was realized and acted out in Huairou and Beijing. . . In 1985, although 60 percent of the women attending the Forum were from developing nations, direction came largely from developed countries. By 1995 the focus and momentum moved to women of the South, with women in the North serving more as supporters, listeners and collaborators." From "Look at the World Through Women's Eyes," *Church & Society*, (May/June 1996), 6.

3. The complete Platform is 125 pages; even the condensed version is nine pages long. Therefore, the version of the Platform that we have provided in this issue simply outlines the 12 critical areas of concern. A copy of the complete Platform for Action can be obtained by writing to the U.N. Department for Public Information (UNDPI), S-1005, U.N. Headquarters, New York, NY 10017, or by faxing them at 212/963-4556.

Chuang Tzu is taking a stroll with Hui Tzu.
Coming to a bridge, Chuang Tzu leans over and
remarks, "Look at those minnows darting here and
there. How free and pleasurable is the life of a fish."

"You are not a fish," Hui Tzu counters
contentiously. "How do you know what gives pleasure
to fish?"

"You are not I," says Chuang Tzu. "How do you
know that I don't know what gives pleasure to a fish?"

— A story heard many times by the CWR delegation
while in China

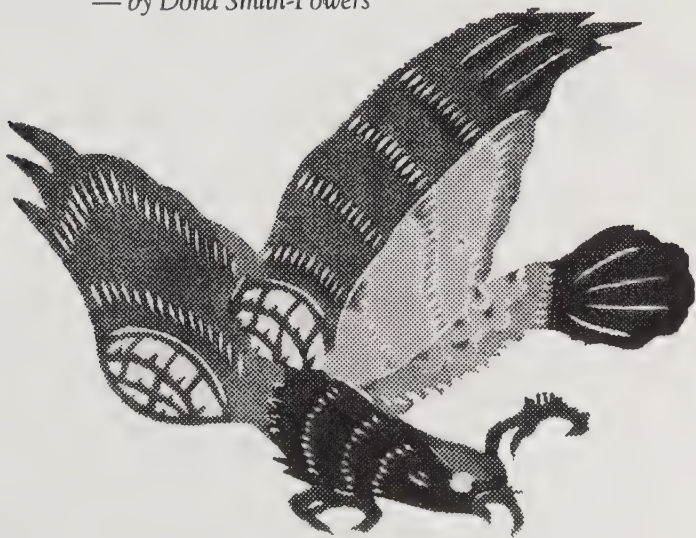
ON AN EARLY MORNING WALK UP A HILL

Mornings glory in purple and pink
and a pure heart at center

Deadly and beautiful inhabit the same
Mosquito and butterfly share the dew of early morning.

Rock on which I stand
is holy ground
Holding me up in the light
at the end of the tunnel
Voice from the past speaks
as I dig with child's hands in the sand
"It's a hole to China!"

— *by Dona Smith-Powers*



A Journal of Departure and Arrival

by Victoria Rue

Aug. 7, 1995: Regal Riverside Hotel, Hong Kong

Crossing the International Dateline may have confused my thinking. I believe it was two days ago I took off from San Francisco for Los Angeles to be part of my parent's 50th wedding anniversary. This was the first leg of my journey that would eventually join me with my CWR delegation in China. In Los Angeles, with many old friends of my parents gathered 'round, we ate heartily and reminisced with speeches, slides and music. What a proud evening it was for we eight Rue children to honor the golden journey of Katie and Jim Rue.

After dancing late into the evening on August 5, the alarm went off too early for this 48-year-old teenager. But rising became energized as I began to imagine the experiences ahead in Asia, among them the U.N. Fourth World Conference on Women! Two movies, several old TV series, two documentaries and many meals later, I arrived here in Hong Kong to spend a short night and fly tomorrow morning to Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Aug. 8, 1995: Phnom Penh, Cambodia

The brief flight of an hour and a half wasn't brief enough as I anticipated seeing Kathryn after two months of separation. Just like in the movies, I pictured Kathryn's face in a broad smile standing amidst a tight crowd of Cambodians outside customs. So much for the movies. Instead, as we landed I spotted a large array of troops lined up on the tarmac, not awaiting our plane, but that of the Vietnamese president! (Later I learned it was his first diplomatic visit to the new

royal government). I walked out of the plane, struck by the brilliant light and the sudden surge of temperature and humidity. The man next to me, a lawyer who teaches in the American law school (there is also a French law school), guided me easily through the customs process.

Any second now, I was sure I would see Kathryn's wave. As I emerged from the air-conditioned, one-room Pochentong international airport, I was besieged by drivers, cyclists who would take me, "very cheap very cheap," to my destination. I grinned knowingly and waved them aside "No, thank you. I'm being picked up by someone. No. No, thank you."

. . . As I surveyed the crowd, it was clear that Kathryn was not there. Ah, well. No problem.

"Madame," a small, thin teenage boy said at my elbow. "Madame, I will take you, very cheap." "No, no," I insisted. "I have a friend coming." He moved away, keeping an eye on me. My American lawyer friend came up and said, "Want a lift into town?" "No thanks, my friend will be here any minute." The heat seemed to grow in intensity. The minutes ticked by. "Madame. . ." the thin young teen was back. "Madame, a ride?" Many cars and passengers had arrived and left. Even the Vietnamese president's motorcade had hurled off down the one road that stretched from Phnom Penh to the airport. "No," I firmly said. "Madame. . . perhaps you

*August 7, 1995
Regal Riverside Hotel, Hong Kong
Crossing the International Dateline may
have confused my thinking. I believe it was
40 days ago I took off from Los Angeles
for Los Angeles to be part of my parent's
50th Wedding Anniversary. This was
first leg of my journey. That was
eventually join me with my CWR
in China. In Los Angeles, with me
friends of my parents gathered round
ate heartily and reminisced with
slides and music. What a joy
it was for us eight kids and
the golden journey of Katie and
after dancing late into the
on August 5, the alarm clock
early for this 48 year old
rising became energized
to imagine the experience
in Asia, among them
World Conference on Women
several old TV series
and many meals
in Hong Kong to spend
and fly tomorrow*

would like to sit down in the shade?" "Yes, yes, thank you, that's a good idea." And so he stood a ways off as I sat on a row of plastic chairs framed by the airport's shadow.

I believe it was at this point, perhaps 45 minutes had transpired, that I began to worry. Was Kathryn sick? Was something wrong, and she couldn't contact me? At that exact moment, uncannily, the young boy sat down next to me, leaned in toward my ear and said, "Perhaps she has forgotten you." I was first offended. "No. No," I protested. Then it all seemed laughable. "No, my friend, she's coming, I know it." Silently, he got up and moved a ways away, still keeping an eye on me. But now, "the poisonous thought" had been poured into my ear: FORGOTTEN ME? Impossible! But maybe there was a mix up with the date — no, no, impossible.

It was now an hour and a half since I'd emerged from the airport. The boy was patient. He looked my way, "Madame?" "All right," I said, begrudgingly. "We'll wait another 10 minutes — and if she's still not here, I'll go with you." Ten minutes slowly ticked by. "All right. We'll go," I sighed. Grinning, he ran for his motorcycle.

We put my large bag in front of him, and I lashed on my back pack, my hand on the shoulder of this boy-child who seemed now to be some kind of salvific angel. I straddled the motorbike, holding onto my hat — Whoosh! Away we went! Out of the airport, onto a road that I'd seen only in photographs — photographs of thousands of people jammed on this asphalt forced to leave as the Khmer Rouge emptied the city of Phnom Penh in 1976.

Now it was jammed again — this time every truck and car that had left the airport stopped dead. An endless stationary stream of carts pulled by moaning water buffalo, U.N. or NGO vehicles that all seemed to be white Broncos, motorcycles carrying sometimes four people at once, trucks piled high with crates of shrieking chickens — a torrent of noise! Ineffectual but stern police stood exasperated amidst the chaos. All traffic had been stopped in both directions for the Vietnamese president's motorcade. Oh, it dawned on me, Kathryn must be somewhere in all of this! We crept along, this boy-angel using the side of the road, sometimes fields, sometimes ruts. I scanned the traffic for some sight of Kathryn. Then the boy-angel had a better

idea. We turned down side roads, through shacks, and large puddles of water left from the monsoon rains. Concrete buildings and dirt roads became a thick maze that the angel wove into a direction. So this was Phnom Penh.

All I had said to him was the name of the NGO that had served as Kathryn's base while doing her research in Cambodia, Church World Service. Almost an hour later we had crisscrossed many parts of the city and doubled back several times in the thick bright heat. Then the boy-angel hailed a man on the street. "Friend," he'd said. In a conversation that seemed to be a pastiche of Cambodian and French, directions were given amidst many arm and hand signals. My intrepid boy-angel pressed on. We turned a corner and there was a white Bronco with "Church World Service" printed in graceful letters on its door. We'd made it! I almost flew off the motorcycle into the two-story concrete building. "Hello," I said to the Cambodian receptionist. "Hello! I'm Victoria, is Kathryn here?" "Kathryn?" she said. "Oh no! Not here?" I gasped. Linda Hartke, the director of the organization, stepped from another office, smiling slowly as the situation became clear to her. "Kathryn left hours ago," she said, "to pick you up at the airport!"

My boy-angel waited patiently but triumphantly outside. I wanted to hug him for all his perseverance, that American gesture, too effusive in Phnom Penh. Instead I gave him a very generous tip. I waved good-bye, wondering if he was headed back to the airport to save another lost soul.

Almost an hour later, as I was resting with a cool glass of water before me and chatting with Linda about her work, Kathryn entered the screen door and let out a scream of frustration when she saw me. "VICTORIA!" She softened and hugged me. But then she pulled back, "VICTORIA!" I insistently moved forward and hugged her. Still exasperated, Kathryn wailed "Victoria . . . my dearest, when you're in Asia, and someone says they'll meet you, no matter what, NO MATTER WHAT— STAY THERE!"

She caught me, and gave me a telling kiss.

What an arrival!

CWR Delegation

Kaye Ashe

Selisse Berry

Sandy Boucher

Jaime Burnett

Sherron Courneen

Linda Frankel

Mary Ellen Gaylord

Bea Heinze-Westley

Alice Kawash

Nancy Kubik

Carmelita Logerwell

Judith McDaniel

Lucinda Nuñez

Herminia Paz

Rae Perraccini

Kathryn Poethig

Lucinda Ramberg

Susan Rayburn

Victoria Rue

Roxanne Seagraves

Dona Smith-Powers

Myrna Tuttle

Marta Vides

Lisa Vincent-Morrison

Melissa Weaver

Pat Weaver

Vail Weller

Diana Wynne

Barbara Zoloth

Itinerary

DAY 1 — AUG. 19, 1995 SAN FRANCISCO/SHANGHAI

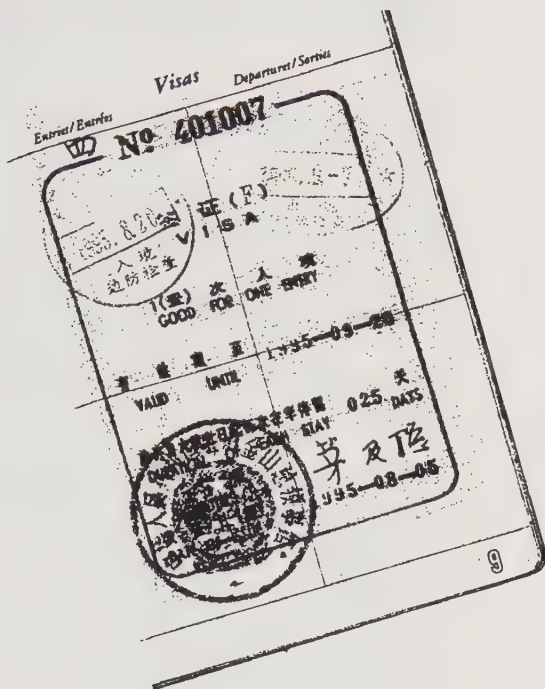
Depart San Francisco for a pleasant flight to Shanghai via Air China.

DAY 2 — AUG. 20, 1995 SHANGHAI

After an evening arrival, transfer to the Galaxy Hotel for rest.

DAY 3 — AUG. 21, 1995 SHANGHAI

Full-day tour of Huànpu River, Children's Palace, Yu Garden and Jade Buddha Temple, with a Chinese acrobatic show in the evening.



DAY 4 — AUG. 22, 1995 SHANGHAI/SUZHOU

In the morning, leave Shanghai by train. After arrival in Suzhou, tour Suzhou embroidery factory, Sandalwood factory, Garden of the Master of the Nets, and the Tiger Hill. Stay at the Yadu Hotel.

DAY 5 — AUG. 23, 1995 SUZHOU/HANGZHOU

Morning boat cruise on the Grand Canal to Jiaxin (4 hours). Discover the local lifestyle as workers commute to work, etc. After lunch on the boat, take a bus to Hangzhou (2 hours). Stay at the Dragon Hotel.

DAY 6 — AUG. 24, 1995 HANGZHOU

Known for its heavenly beauty, Hangzhou attracts thousands of tourists annually. Cruise the exquisite West Lake and explore Xiao Yinzhou Islet, the tree polls mirroring the moon, orioles singing in the willows and the autumn moon over the calm lake and botanical gardens.

DAY 7 — AUG. 25, 1995 HANGZHOU/XIAN

In the morning, visit the famous Lin Ying Temple before an afternoon flight to Xian. Stay at the Dynasty Hotel.

DAY 8 — AUG. 26, 1995 XIAN

Full-day tour of the famous Terracotta Warriors of Qin Tomb excavation. Also visit the archeological ruins of Banpo village.

DAY 9 — AUG. 27, 1995 XIAN/BEIJING

Tour Wild Goose Pagoda and Provincial Museum before flying to Beijing. Transfer to Radisson-Movenpick Hotel or same class hotel for rest.

DAY 10 — AUG. 28, 1995 BEIJING

Whole-day city tour of Forbidden City and Summer Palace. Peking duck dinner.

DAY 11 — AUG. 29, 1995 BEIJING

Full-day tour of Great Wall and Ming Tombs. Depending on availability, attend a Chinese Cultural Show in the evening.

DAY 12-19 — AUG. 30-SEPT. 6, 1995 BEIJING

Looking at the World Through Women's Eyes

by the Rev. Mary Ellen Gaylord

This text is from a sermon given by the Rev. Mary Ellen Gaylord on Sept. 24, 1995, ten days after returning from China and immediately following a church meeting in which a male clergy member, accused of sexual misconduct by several women, was acquitted. Biblical texts used to prepare the sermon were Ruth 1:7-17 and John 4: 4-19, 27-29, 39-40.

"Accept your destiny as you do your duty.

Be satisfied with your position and obey the voice of heaven."

In preparation for my trip to China to attend the NGO Forum, I tried to read widely about this country shrouded in mystery and myth. Its history was only briefly touched on in my education, its people largely unknown to me until I moved west to California, and now they were soon to be my hosts in a conference where I was unsure we would be welcomed. In particular, I had read about the cultural revolution and the response of China since the student uprising in Tianneman Square in 1989.

It is not an easy story to read, whether in Pearl Buck's *The Good Earth* or more recent books like *Mandate of Heaven* or Nicholas Kristoff and Sheryl Wudunn's powerful *China Wakes*. It is a history where women are not valued and the birth of a daughter often meant that she did not survive. Even today, with the number of children limited to one, a girl child may be abandoned or aborted before birth. During the Cultural Revolution, family loyalty was abandoned and

children turned against their parents, calling them counter-revolutionaries or bourgeois for believing in a system that Mao and the Red Guards condemned during The Great Leap Forward.

On my first day in Shanghai, and later in the other cities we visited, one of the things that struck me most strongly was the women's eyes. For in those eyes were reflected the pain and suffering of history, the compassion and the caring, the hope and the despair of not only their own lives, but of the many who had come before them. We had one opportunity to worship with a Chinese community in the western city of Xian. The service was at 7 a.m. in a meeting hall that was indistinguishable as a church except that, as we approached, we heard the singing — unfamiliar words but familiar melodies. Inside, the room was already packed, and we were escorted through the crowd that was sitting and standing in the courtyard outside. Seated with the choir, we had a good vantage point.

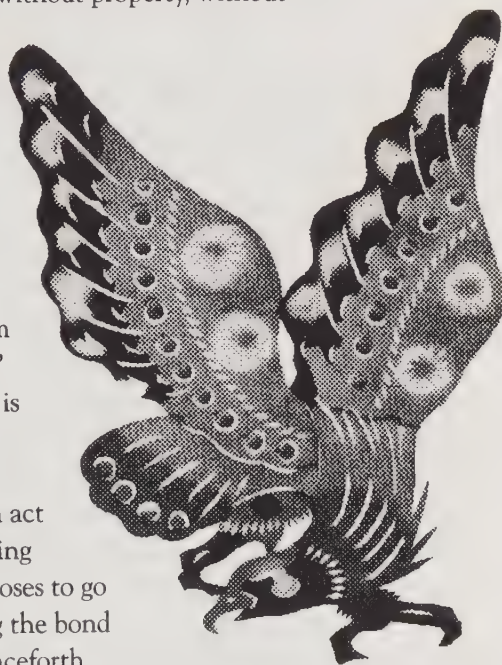
Since I did not understand what was being said, I let my eyes tell the story. About 75% of the congregation was women, mostly older. There was one woman sitting in the front row who drew my attention. I could not tell you what she wore, for most wore the same blue or gray rather nondescript clothes. I could not tell you if her hair was gray or white. But her eyes, dark and piercing, questioning and intent, etched a story I longed to know and so could only imagine. She seemed both interested and afraid, present but removed, as if her thoughts were somewhere else. The lines on her face told of long hours in the hot sun; the eyes told of pain and disappointment and, in this place, a glimmer of hope. She never returned my look, but I could not take my eyes off her.

The preacher that morning was a young woman, a recent graduate of Nanking Seminary. Again, her presence spoke as clearly as her words, delivered in the best Baptist tradition. In contrast to the bleakness of her surroundings, her bright red and almost shocking pink blouse stood like a beacon in the simple monotone and unadorned room around her. The woman sitting next to me clutched a Bible and a hymnal. It was quite obviously her first time here, and she was trying to find her way through a new ritual and new words. Around me, the choir held a good intergenerational mix of men and

women, the hope of the growing church in China.

Thus it was that I resonated to the theme of the NGO Forum: "Look at the World through Women's Eyes." And so I invite you, men and women, to look at your world, the world we live in on Sunday, September 24, 1995, through the eyes of women.

Let's begin by looking at our readings from the Old and the New Testament. Clear in the story from Ruth is the fact that women's identity and worth is tied to that of their husbands. Bereft of her husband and now both sons, Naomi and her two daughters-in-law are left to fend for themselves, without property, without family, without any means to survive. Naomi sees no other alternative except to return from Moab to Judah, and to encourage Ruth and Orpah to return to their own families, where they may find another husband. "I am too old to have a husband," she says, and then adds, "it is exceedingly bitter for me." Orpah and Ruth make different choices, and in an act of courage and faith, of caring loyalty and trust, Ruth chooses to go with Naomi, clearly stating the bond that will tie them from henceforth together as family: "For where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God." It is a radical departure from the customs of the time, and a powerful statement of the relationship between the two women.



Similarly, our Gospel story is a departure from the values of that period and a recognition of the value of this unnamed Samaritan woman. "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of

Samaria?" she asks. An outcast, she is amazed that Jesus would even talk to her, and when he shares with her the value of the living water he can give her, she responds with curiosity and interest, openness and honesty. And, in turn, it is she who is able to persuade others to listen to him and believe. Again and again, Jesus affirms and reaches out to all persons, Jew and Greek, slave and free, men and women, with compassion and love. And as the story reminds us, "many Samaritans from that city believe in him because of the woman's testimony."

At the Forum, there were many voices filled with pain and anger, many eyes that invited the opportunity to share. And although I heard the voices of many women speak of the rape and brutality toward women in war, of the young girls sold into prostitution in Southeast Asia, it is the eyes of the Women in Black protesting quietly all crimes of violence against women that I remember. It is the eyes of the disabled women struggling to get a wheelchair through the mud that I remember. It is the eyes of the Muslim women hidden behind veils, heavily dressed in chadors, trying to convince others and themselves that Islam is a religion that promises gender equity.

Perhaps it is our own struggle to be heard here in this society that makes those eyes so powerful. Perhaps the memory of when my voice wasn't heard allowed me to better read the pain in those women's eyes. The memory of when I was told I would have to have a man negotiate a mortgage for me, or when I had to hire a male lawyer in order for my father to hear my business proposal, or when I was told that my ordination paper was too emotional and my theology not grounded in familiar language. Yesterday, as I came out of the Ecclesiastical Council that voted not to accept the recommendation of the Committee on Church and Ministry regarding allegations of sexual misconduct against a minister in this association, the eyes I saw were of the two women who had the courage to come forward and were now filled with tears of hurt and frustration. The reasons for our pain may be different, but the eyes speak a universal language.

There are many strong impressions with which I return from Beijing. One is the power of women's desire for peace — peace among nations, peace within families — and with it a deepening

clarity that women are unwilling to see violence of any kind, whether the sexual violence of war or the violence in our homes and in our culture. We are tired of having our children brutalized, our families torn apart, our sons sent off to war and our daughters abused.

Whether in Beijing, in Bosnia or Rwanda, in the Philippines or our own community, it is still difficult to hear the voices of women. Instead, those very voices are demeaned and ridiculed; inferences are made that it is women seeking power rather than justice that prompts recommendations and platforms. If you can't hear our voices or choose not to listen, at least take time to look at our eyes. For they have a story to tell.

One last story. . . on our journey to Beijing, we spent ten days touring China. Hangzhou, a picturesque city west of Shanghai on the edge of a beautiful lake, reminded me of a college town. Several of us had gotten in the routine of rising at 6 a.m. to join people in the local park or nearest plaza as they participated in their morning ritual of tai chi. The street cleaners would be almost finished with their jobs of sweeping up all the litter that a busy city accumulates in a day. Small groups of people would begin to gather for their particular form of tai chi or the martial arts. In Hangzhou, there was even a sizable number who did ballroom dancing before 8 a.m. And each morning, several thousand would line the edge of the lake at the beginning of the day.

Roxanne Seagraves and I had been invited on our first morning to join a group of women. Awkwardly, we tried to follow their smooth and flowing movement. When it ended, one woman began speaking in English with us. Although her English was not easy to understand, we exchanged greetings, and slowly through guesses, gestures and a few words, we learned that they all were taking courses in adult education at a local college in English, calligraphy and martial arts. We were introduced to her two sisters and learned that they each had sons and grandchildren in the U.S. When we returned the next day, she was delighted to see us, and on the third morning we brought along more women from our group. It was Roxanne's birthday, and when we told that to their leader, together we sang "Happy Birthday" in English. Then began the most amazing duet. First Roxanne and then one of the sisters would move, tentatively and then with a kind

of synchronized and harmonizing motion, a non-verbal conversation, an invitation. And then a faint voice and a familiar tune and even more familiar words. "The more we get together, together, the happier we'll be." Now we joined in, "for your friend is my friend, and my friend is your friend." And their eyes were bright and full of hope, and the tears on each of our faces were tears of joy.

I am reminded of the words of invitation of Mary Sue Gast, director of the Coordinating Center for Women of the United Church of Christ, who suggested, in a workshop at the conference, the idea of a theology of all voices. . . a theology that listens to the voices of our sisters and brothers, that discovers God in all places and that learns respect for the diversity of the human race. It is an invitation to see the holy through women's eyes, to see God through women's eyes. I saw the holy. I saw God's joy in the eyes of those Chinese women, and I felt God's presence in that place. Thanks be to God.

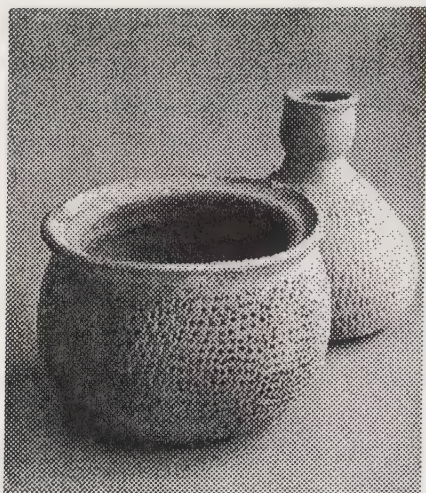
ON AN EVENING WALK NEAR THE OPULANT XIAN HOTEL

Four and five star hotels
 across the street from vegetable farmers
 selling in the smoke of skewered meat.
Colored lights, soft, through smoky haze.
Friends talking and eating.

Puddles and broken brick
 call us to watch our step
As we head back to opulence.

— Dona Smith-Powers





Reflections on the Warriors

by Judith McDaniel

They stretched out in front of us the length of a football field — the famous Terracotta Warriors at the archaeological dig in Xian. They would have been larger than life if I could have stood next to one, but from this distance they look a bit like a little boy's toys, lined up in parallel ditches dug in a field. I understand that this was an extraordinary archaeological find. I understand the artistry involved in each cast. I applaud mentally when our guide tells us that the Terracotta Warriors were commissioned by a woman who suggested to the emperor that he memorialize himself this way instead of by killing his retainers and burying them with him. Progress comes in different forms.

In Xian, we asked to see another archaeological site, the 6700-year-old village of Banpo. Here are more ditches, but these surround hearths and scattered remnants of pottery, shards that look like those the Anasazi and Hohokam people left in Arizona only 1500 years

ago. We asked to see this site because the village of Banpo was matrilineal and matriarchal. They know this because of the burials — women were buried with women, men with men. Children who died were buried under the floor of the mother's home in a clay pot with a hole left in the top so the soul of the child could come back to its family.

This museum was built by Chairman Mao when he realized he would need many more women in the work force. He knew that culturally specific gender roles didn't change easily, and the Confucian model of woman did not include working in factories and fields alongside men. Chairman Mao built this museum to demonstrate to women that they had once "held up half the sky" and could do so again.

This is what is meant by gender: not what one is capable of as a result of a given set of genitalia and sex organs, but what society decides should go along with each gender, that is, what men and women *believe* they can do because they are male and female. Women, in Chairman Mao's new China, weren't any different in their sexual physical bodies than they had been before. They *were* physically different, though, because a woman with bound feet — meant to keep her subservient and dependent in the home — couldn't really hold up half the sky without a good, firm-footed foundation, and so foot binding had to go. But the major difference in Chinese women before and after the revolution was in the psychological and social attributes of what the Chinese people were encouraged to believe a "real" woman did. That's gender. It's about what we believe, not about sex.



Belief is odd. We're told it's hard, but in fact belief tends to be driven by desire and fear, and it is easier to believe than to live with uncertainty and ambiguity. Some things we want to believe, and so we do, in spite of the evidence. Some things we don't want to believe, and even if they shake the evidence of it in front of our faces, we won't believe. People believe the incredible stories radio talk show hosts make up. I've listened to people who are perfectly willing to

believe that Hillary Clinton murdered Vincent Foster (in the library with the lead pipe, no doubt). They don't believe the government official who says fluorocarbons are destroying the ozone layer. No evidence, they say.

After the sabotage of a railroad train in Arizona by the self-proclaimed "Sons of the Gestapo," I was talking with the check-out clerk at the grocery store. We didn't understand what killing tourists on a train in Arizona had to do with the federal government or Ruby Ridge or Waco and the Branch Davidians — all "connections" made in the letter left by the perpetrators. "But then," she said, "people believe some really weird things these days. About government conspiracies. UFOs." I agreed. "It makes believing in God seem almost commonsensical," I said. "I like that," she laughed. "Commonsensical."

Even before the O.J. Simpson trial began, most Americans believed that he was guilty or innocent. I spoke with one elderly, wealthy, white woman who was sure he was innocent. Why? She couldn't believe he would have done it because in her world sports heroes simply didn't do those things. Others held the opposite belief. Specific evidence was irrelevant. Common sense was irrelevant. A web of previously held beliefs was the scaffolding supporting these conclusions.

We form our beliefs out of the systems of values we absorb from childhood on; whether these are family values or culturally specific values, those values dictate what we are willing or not willing to believe. If our cultural values tell us that a woman who wields power in public is inappropriate or unnatural or unfeminine, we will be able to believe that a woman like Hillary Clinton could and probably would do evil things.



In the distance, mist rose over the lake as a fine rain fell. It was 6 a.m., and I was walking with my camera, trying to ignore the rain as I looked for the legendary lotus blossoms that grow up and down the shoreline of West Lake in Hangzhou, China. The light was gray, but I wasn't alone as I hurried toward the lake. People on foot and on

bicycles were going my direction. Some nodded, but most were intent on their conversations.

I had been in China for four days, and this was my first venture out alone. I knew the Chinese government was nervous about having all of these activist women arrive in their midst. We were encouraged to travel in groups, stay to the prearranged itinerary, which would keep us from any unplanned contact with Chinese people.

And so I was savoring that moment of solitude, in the midst of all those strangers moving busily toward the lake, when a woman — close to my own age, 50 or older — began to fit her stride to mine, then lifted her umbrella over my taller head as well as her own. I smiled my thanks, though I'd rather have walked alone. I wondered if she thought I'd be safer in her company than by myself.

Around us, on every spare bit of grass, on porches, even in the empty parking lot, people were moving in the slow ritualistic dance of tai chi, the Chinese national exercise. Some danced alone, but more often they were in groups, following a leader who set the pace, each hand rising, moving to the side in perfect congruence with every other hand in the group.

Our beliefs are like that when they work well for us; they are the threads, the web, that hold us in rhythm with others in our culture.

"Where are you from?" my walking companion asked in careful, stilted English. "The United States," I told her, enunciating fully, and then added, "for the United Nations Conference." She nodded enthusiastically, and we walked on, smiling. One of our guides had told us when we were walking through a section of Old Shanghai that everyone in China knew about the U.N. Conference. I wondered what they believed we were doing there. I wondered what she believed about me.

My companion gestured toward a group of women under a large tree and left me near the edge of the lake. She was greeted by the group, and I imagined some of them were asking her about me since I saw nods and glances in my direction. Then she stepped into the group and the dance began. I felt a bubble of silence rise around the group, setting them off from pedestrians who were still strolling

toward their own groups, from the strains of Western music that filtered down from the pavilion further on. They must have been meeting like this for a very long time. Their energy matched effortlessly. The cohesiveness of the group was palpable to me. Each woman was a part of the whole. None stood out, none broke the shared choreography. For a moment, I longed to join them.



The Chinese government discovered the scaffolding of their own belief system when they landed this international prize, the U.N. Conference on Women. I'm sure China was asking why it ever volunteered to host this event, as women attending the conference insisted they *would* speak out about human rights violations, nuclear arms tests, female infanticide, and more issues that directly implicated China as well as other nations. Before I left for Beijing, I'd heard at a State Department briefing that China had originally expected the Forum to be apolitical. In spite of the assertion that "women hold up half the sky," we weren't expected to define what that meant to us or what our particular sky might look like.

"They thought you'd come to shop," said Marjorie Margolies Mezvinsky, head of the U.S. delegation. When I opened my official registration packet and found the set of "Shopping Vouchers for the VIPs of the '95 World Conference on Women" issued by the Chinese Administrative Office of the Shopping Centers, I realized Marjorie was absolutely right. Men may be warriors. Women shop.

Chinese values about a well-ordered society meant that it was easy for government officials to believe that demonstrations by foreigners would be disruptive and outrageous. One rumor that we heard repeated over and over was that the Forum was mainly going to be attended by lesbians and prostitutes who intended to demonstrate by taking our clothes off in public. Consequently, we heard, each policeman was issued a sheet to wrap around the naked bodies if that occurred. I never saw a sheet, but I did see many policemen wearing protective gloves to prevent them from contracting HIV or other diseases carried by "women like that."

I am a woman like that. A lesbian. But I am also a middle-class white woman whose cultural values tell me what I should believe and how I should behave: I should be nice, I should cooperate, no matter the cost to myself. The web of middle-class cultural values I was raised to revere would have fit quite well into the tai chi dance I had observed. No movement out of place. Everything flowing smoothly together in a prearranged order. I have always been grateful that the two cultural definitions of me were contradictory. I needed that juxtaposition of a troublemaking lesbian sexual outlaw and a good girl. It allowed me to create myself.



In China today, men and women are believed to be equal in all things. Equality is an official government position. Women we spoke with said, yes, men and women were equal, equal in society, equal under the law. And then they told us stories about women who had to work in the factory and in the home, while the men only had to work one job. Or they told us about an extraordinary man who would start to fix dinner if he arrived home from work first.

But by the year 2000 there will be living in China "a great hoodlum army of 70 million single men," according to the *Shanghai Daily* newspaper. These are the statistics that result from the abortions of female fetuses and infanticide of girl babies and the death by neglect — or worse — of girl children.

One couple, one child. That is the policy in modern China. For 2500 years, boy children have been valued more than girl children. The imbalance isn't a surprise to me. But I do find it shocking to hear the statistics. If the statistics were reversed, if by some act of nature, some natural disaster (for I find it impossible to imagine male children being buried in the sand to die because they are "worthless"), modern China were facing a surplus of 70 million women in the year 2000, we would not be reading about a "hoodlum army," no matter how badly those women wanted husbands. China's neighbors would not be anxious about women crossing borders en masse to kidnap and enslave husbands. Those are the very real fears of China's neighbors today, however, as they watch this imbalance of

the sexes develop toward a preponderance of males. These warriors they fear are not terracotta.



So Chairman Mao's museum at the village of Banpo didn't work. He could ordain that women had once held up half the sky and would again. He could unbind women's feet. He could create a society that expressed belief in women's equality with men. But surface adherence to a political agenda does not yet match the deeper belief system, and thus, reality is different. The reality is that in China women are not worth as much as men, and that reality is eating out the heart of Chinese society.

Understanding this has challenged me. It challenges me to look behind the beliefs that we espouse here in the United States — beliefs, for example, that we value families, that we cherish our children, that human dignity is every person's right. It challenges me to look at the reality that speaks more loudly than our words: Families are broken. More children are living in poverty than ever before, and children die from neglect and abuse at a horrifying rate. Dignity is reserved for those who can buy it.

Children were valued in the village of Banpo 6700 years ago. Even in death, they were kept close and cherished. The reality behind that belief is as solid as an earthenware jar buried under the hearth. That old village may not have convinced modern Chinese society that women are worth as much as men, but it does set a standard for measuring our beliefs.

Weavers in China

by Melissa Weaver

It was my friend's idea to travel to China and the Forum with her mother, so I invited my mother, too, a great opportunity to shake things up. My mother grew up in a small town in Texas, was whisked off to live with wealthier relatives in the city before she could make a big mistake with the local farm boy, was married off to a doctor and had five kids. She gradually became more and more shut out by her husband, my father. Divorced now, she feels rejected, yet unaware of the shared suffering of many other women. What a thrill to be a witness to the events of the Forum with her.

Weavers in China, report back, one year later

PAT

In a bus of Buddhists, nuns and reverends
two atheist sinners from Texas prayed
for their lives careening through China
We bonded on the bus screaming in the front row
sucking exhaust and singing songs
We bonded in the room eating noodles
with MSG from a Styrofoam cup
holed up to escape the chaos and heat outside

I now know her wounds though she never told
in a deep dark place
I hid them and nursed them
we broke down we cracked the ice

I now know her wounds at the hands of the hypocrites
the men who kept her under their thumb
the uncle the good doctor

Together in Huairou with new friends we grew closer
I know her strength though she seems overwhelmed
she knows the divine in us all
she's a rock of granite a mountain
she is the great mother of many
she is undaunted she is lonesome
and finally she has her first grandchild

She told me things she's never told
she knows she also "wears the veil"
(I quietly rage against the machine
and my moods drive her crazy)
she is glad not to have grown up later
when women are willful and headstrong
she thinks she could never be that way
I tell her she is that way but doesn't trust herself
she is born in the year of the horse
I want her to rage
I want us to speak up for ourselves
I want her to run unimpeded through virgin paths
her spirit unconquered her soul forever free
the great gray mare my mother



Vignettes on the Road to Hwaichow

by Lisa Vincent-Morrison

She was old. Her eyes were midnight. She shuffled inside the doorway. Her feet told stories. Each foot was barely the size of my clenched fist. I was embarrassed. We had paraded through her living room unannounced, uninvited. I will remember the alleyways of Old Shanghai City. Our guide took a great risk leading us through the maze. Poverty is not for tourist consumption by order of the Chinese government. I did not learn her name. I will never forget her face.

Her hair was thick black. She was probably my mother's age. Her nimble fingers and precisioned eyes met exactly at each stitch. The magnifying glass was inconsequential. She was one of eight women in the room. Each one was painting a different landscape with Hangzhou silk embroidery thread. For a brief second, I looked beyond the drafting tables. The courtyard was sumptuous but dry. There were little girls embroidering in the windows beyond the courtyard. We were not taken to see their work. I did not buy anything in the gift shop. Some said the prices were too high. I thought little girls are too high a price.

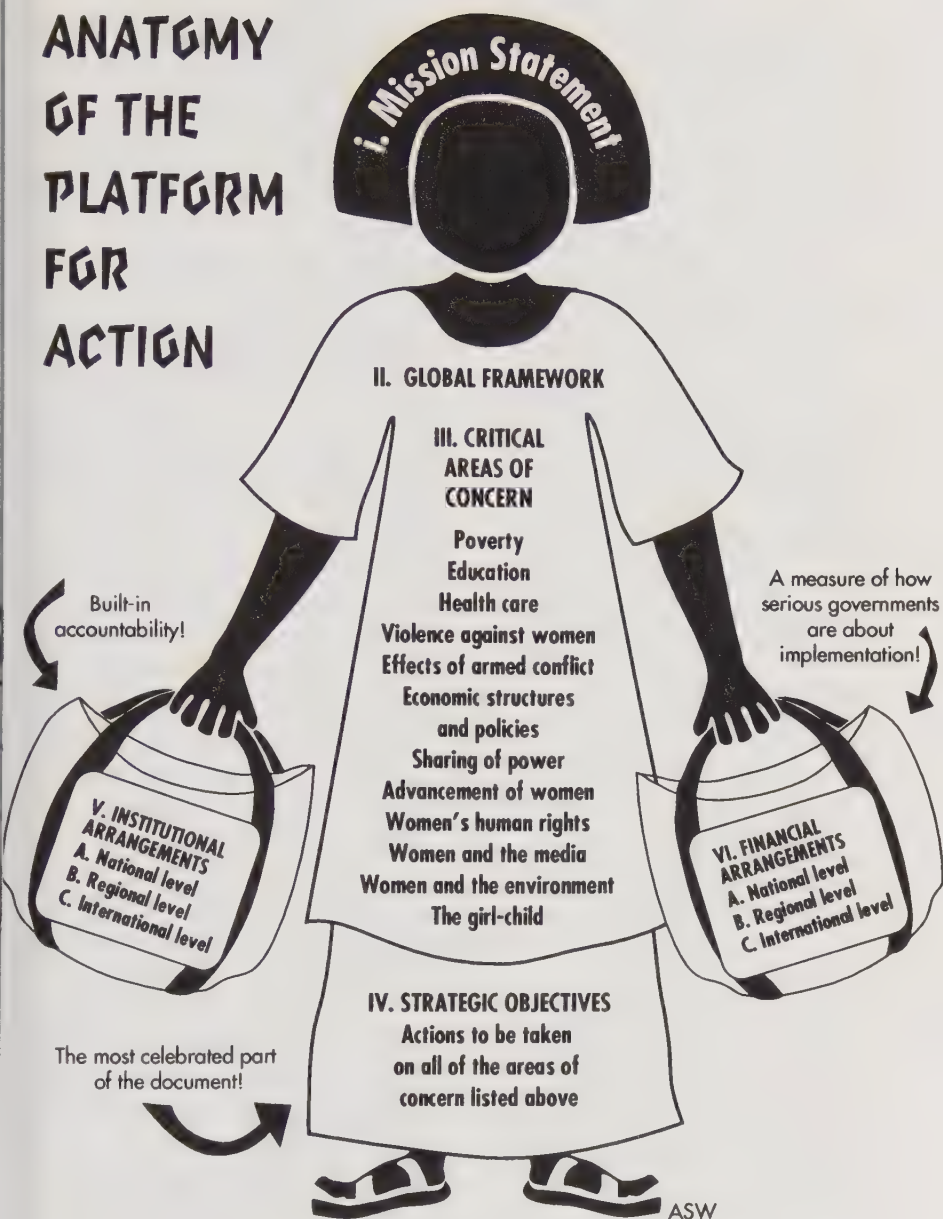


She had no face or feet. Her voluptuous breast loomed above and beside me. She was laid bare to touch and be seen. Her nipples were erect. The presence of her sculpted torso shaded by the trees reclaimed the subtle but surging beginning of China some 6000 years ago. The Banpo matriarchal society has not been forgotten. The archeological digs have been turned into a museum in Xian. She was a wall relief into the children's amusement park. Funny, I did not find her amusing.

Her assignment was to detain, open and admit. She wore an army-issued green uniform. Her hands were neatly trimmed in white gloves. She took our water bottles. It was mid-afternoon. The humidity equaled the temperature in nearly triple digits. I looked around. Some of the women would not make it through the opening ceremonies in their elaborate native dress without water. Inside Gate 20 to the left was a watering table. Two uniformed women were pouring water as fast as cups could be pulled out of plastic bags. I reached in among waiting women and retrieved a cup for my roommate and myself. As we headed toward our seats, I wondered how else during this conference we would host ourselves with diverted resources.

She was 12. . . maybe 15. Her skin tones were hues of gray. She had bare shoulders. Her eyes followed me throughout the conference grounds and back home. This billboard-size work of art near the conference's center stage still beckons me daily to work for change. This was the first time the girl-child was listed among the issues on the Platform for Action, the working document for this international gathering of women. In countries where one-child population policies are practiced, little boys are favored for birthing over little girls. There are already one million women missing from the next generation. In my lifetime, some countries of the world will have a surplus of young men compared to their female population. Will we see an increase in the trafficking of women, sexual tourism, and enforced prostitution? Who will address the surviving women's psychological and emotional disorders related to such powerlessness?

ANATOMY OF THE PLATFORM FOR ACTION



CONDENSED VERSION OF THE PLATFORM FOR ACTION: **12 Critical Areas of Concern**

1. POVERTY

- ◆ Create social security systems wherever they do not exist.
- ◆ Develop gender-sensitive national and international policies, including those related to structural adjustment.
- ◆ Provide poor women with economic opportunities and equal access to affordable housing, land, natural resources, credit, and other services.
- ◆ Devise statistical means to recognize and make visible the work — including unpaid and domestic — of women and their contribution to national economies.

2. EDUCATION

- ◆ Close the gender gap in primary and secondary school education by the year 2005.
- ◆ Eradicate illiteracy of women worldwide by 2000 or another target date to be agreed upon at the Conference.
- ◆ Improve women's access to and provide funding for vocational training, science and technology.
- ◆ Develop curricula, textbooks, and teaching aids free of gender stereotypes.

3. HEALTH

- ◆ Strengthen and reorient health services in order to reduce maternal mortality by at least 50% of the

1990 levels by the year 2000.

- ◆ Strengthen preventive programs that address threats to women's health.
- ◆ Make efforts to combat HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, and recognize the impact of those diseases on women.
- ◆ Promote research on and increase funding for women's health issues and services.

4. VIOLENCE

- ◆ Take integrated legal and social measures to prevent violence and protect women.
- ◆ Adopt measures to eliminate trafficking in women and eradicate violence against women who are vulnerable, such as those with disabilities and migrant workers.
- ◆ Study the causes of violence against women and effective measures of prevention.

5. ARMED CONFLICTS

- ◆ Increase and strengthen women's participation in conflict resolution.
- ◆ Promote women's contribution to fostering a culture of peace.
- ◆ Reduce the incidence of human rights abuses in conflict situations, protect refugee and displaced women, and provide assistance to women of the colonies.

6. ECONOMIC DISPARITY

- ◆ Enact laws to guarantee the rights of women and men to equal pay for equal work, and adjust work patterns to promote the sharing of family responsibilities.
- ◆ Provide women with equal access to resources, employment, markets and trade, as well as to information and technology.
- ◆ Eliminate sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination in the workplace.

7. POWER-SHARING

- ◆ Ensure women's full and equal participation in power structures and decision-making.
- ◆ Develop education and training to increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership.
- ◆ Aim at gender balance in government bodies and the composition of delegations to the U.N.

8. INSTITUTIONS

- ◆ Ensure that responsibility for the advancement of women is invested at the highest level of government.
- ◆ Integrate gender perspectives in all legislation, public policies, programs and projects.
- ◆ Collect and disseminate statistics showing gender impact of policies and programs.

9. HUMAN RIGHTS

- ◆ Encourage ratification of international human rights treaties

and promote their implementation.

- ◆ Provide gender-sensitive human rights training to public officials.
- ◆ Improve access to legal services and literacy through information campaigns and national training programs.

10. MASS MEDIA

- ◆ Take steps to ensure women's access to information and the media on an equal basis.
- ◆ Encourage elimination of gender stereotyping in the media through studies, campaigns, and various forms of self-regulation by media organizations.

11. ENVIRONMENT

- ◆ Involve women in environmental decision-making and integrate gender concerns in policies for sustainable development.
- ◆ Assess the impact of development and environmental policies on women.

12. GIRL-CHILD

- ◆ Eliminate all forms of discrimination, as well as negative cultural attitudes and practices, against girls.
- ◆ Ensure that girls develop a positive self-image and have equal access to education and health care.
- ◆ Protect girls from economic exploitation and eliminate violence against them.

Can We Ask You Anything?

by Victoria Rue

I'm sitting with a Chinese woman translator, a Chinese woman journalist and a Chinese actress. We are in the Lesbian Tent at the NGO Forum in Huairou. This tent has been the source of much curiosity by various Chinese since the conference began. Those of us gathered here today have just been part of a workshop presented by our CWR delegation on lesbian activists working inside patriarchal religions. During the workshop I had talked about the struggle to be both a lesbian and a Catholic, even on the margins. The workshop over, we are encouraged to talk in small groups. The journalist and actress lean forward.

"Can we ask you anything?"

Another Chinese woman sitting nearby offers to translate for me.

"Can we ask you anything?"

I hesitate.

Well... let's see. Go ahead, I say.

"You have a girlfriend?"

Yes.

I point to Kathryn who is on the far side of the tent seated between two young Chinese guides. She is speaking animatedly; they are listening intently.

"And you have many other girlfriends too?"

No, I say.

Then I realize the stereotype they have of me. I show them my commitment ring.

Married, I say (for lack of a better word).

They nod "yes" with surprise on their faces.

"And you are accepted by people in the United States?"

Yes and no, I say.

Again I realize their idea of the U.S.

Discrimination, I say, *there's a lot of fear in my country about being different, whether you're homosexual, an immigrant or refugee, or a person of color.*

"Does your church recognize your marriage?"

No, not at all, I say. *But that doesn't mean other people don't.*

"Why did you choose her?"

I thrilled at the forwardness of this question and the chance it gave me.

When I first got to know Kathryn, I told her I loved how much faith she seemed to have. Faith in God.

"And you said in the workshop that you're Catholic?"

Yes, on the margins.

"And your partner Kathryn is Catholic too?"

No. She's Presbyterian.



Their reaction was palpable, literally open-mouthed disbelief. Later, I learned that in China the gulf between Protestantism and Catholicism is vast. Catholicism is largely suspected as a foreign agent and an encroachment from the West. The bias toward Protestants, perhaps due to a more individual approach, is not the same.

Meanwhile, one of the Chinese guides who has been talking with Kathryn comes over and sits down next to me. She is 17 or 18. She whispers to me.

"I like your partner very much," she says in impeccable English.

Oh, I say laughing, I do too!

She laughs and leans closer and whispers.

"She says she will be with you for the rest of her life!"

Now, tears are running down my cheeks. To be told by a young, curious Chinese woman, something like a long-distance phone call, that my partner loves me for the rest of her life, was both shocking and delicious.

I turn and try to explain my tears to the actress and journalist who are still pondering Kathryn being a Protestant and me being a Catholic. I say to them,

How moved I am by our conversation!

Kathryn joins us. We tell her of the three-way conversation about our relationship. She listens, hearing the nuances of the questions and answers. Then she asks the journalist and the actress,

"Are you married to men?"

They are shocked and laugh nervously, saying

"Yes, yes, of course we are!"

But at that moment, it was clear, because of our conversation together, they understood Kathryn's question now — from our perspective.

Beijing "Browsing"

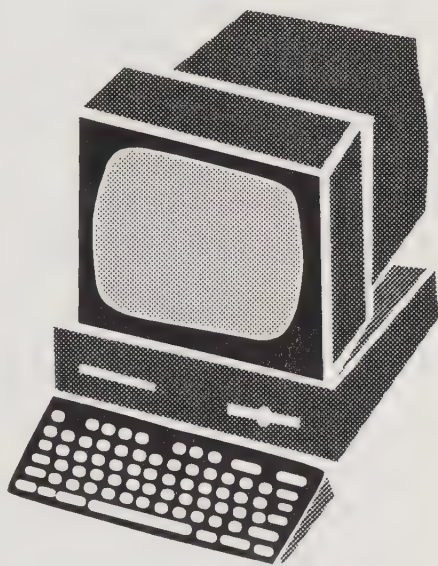
by Diana Wynne

The following is an e-mail letter Diana Wynne wrote to friends after she returned from the NGO Forum.

A number of you asked about my trip to Beijing, so here's a small taste of my journey.

When we left for China on August 19, Harry Wu was still imprisoned, and so we paid major yuan for the *International Herald Tribune*, which might lead you to believe that war (between the U.S. and China? between Taiwan and Boutrous-Boutrous Ghali?) was imminent. Fortunately, a few women caught the CNN broadcast when Wu was declared guilty and put on a plane home (I was too busy watching Chinese soap operas), so we knew that Hillary would be making the trip to Beijing. Unfortunately, her trip became the focus of too many people's interest, as if 30,000 women from around the world meeting in China were not sufficiently interesting to cover.

The CWR delegation was a very stimulating group to travel with.



The tour guide would say: "Today we'll see the Jade Buddha Temple, the Mosque, have lunch, and then go to the Silk Embroidery Factory." And the group would say: "We want to have lunch now, go to the market, drop a few people at the hotel, and see the Mosque tomorrow." It made our local guides fairly crazy, although I imagine we were a mild group compared to the Americans touring after the conference.

We traveled in China by train, bus, and airplane. We asked Monica, our national tour guide, to help us write a sign in Chinese that indicated we were on our way to the conference, and got various honks and a lot of stares. In eight days, we visited Shanghai, Suzhou, Hangzhou, Xian, and Beijing, leaving us thoroughly exhausted (and somewhat paranoid) by Aug. 30, the day of the opening ceremonies. We heard a lot of rumors and held several meetings in our hotel rooms. We were sure we were being watched; were hotel personnel going through our locked bags while we were touring? My roommate and I got in the habit of talking to our mirrors whenever we entered the room. Most of us were carrying sensitive materials: I had papers from a lawyers' organization on Tibet documenting cases of forced sterilization. I was also carrying several books on lesbians in the Presbyterian church for CWR members. All that said, we felt very safe and were never harassed. The security was comparable to attending a rock concert; as compared to traveling in the Middle East, where all the guards have machine guns, I found China very easy. Huge numbers of people attended to our every need, coming to stock the mini-bar or replace our complimentary toothbrushes at a moment's notice. We stayed in first-class hotels, saw remarkable sights, and ate two fabulous Chinese banquets a day.

NGO FORUM IN HUAIROU

Still, we were very unsure what we would find when we got to Huairou. Would it be impossible to get a taxi into Beijing? Would mineral water cost \$2 a bottle? Voice of America said the Chinese people had been told we were all prostitutes and tattooed lesbians, and that the police had been given blankets in case we took off our clothes in public (probably why they canceled Tiananmen Square from our tour).

Some of the reports said that Huairou was filled with unfinished buildings, which was true. Some conference halls had cement floors and ceilings but no walls. But we ate lunch in them and set up exhibits anyway. It's very important to understand this in the context that China is a country always under construction; I can't imagine Las Vegas, or any other U.S. city, sponsoring such a large gathering and paving roads, refurbishing hotels, printing fabulous brochures, etc. on quite this scale. The real effect was apparent the day of the opening ceremonies when about 12,000 of us were flawlessly transported in caravans of 30 buses to Beijing, villagers lining the way to wave and watch us go by. Several thousand children performed in huge dances and formations, while a blimp with the NGO themes flew overhead. It would have been perfect except that a number of us got our first round of the Beijing "bark" from the bad air on the way back to our hotel. You never read about how bad the air quality is in China, but in three weeks, I saw the sky only twice. It is the thing I most appreciate about being home.

Whereas the newspapers here focused on the rain and the complaints about Chinese toilets, *China Daily* was exuberant, dedicating a daily four-color insert to the Forum. It proudly announced how many workshops were offered each day and on what subjects, featured photos from the many demos we held (unless they were about Tibet), and profiled the visitors. Commemorative stamps were issued for the Forum. Glossy brochures featured Chinese women in science or in sports. Only the good news, but still it was encouraging to be noticed.

It is absolutely true that the Chinese participants and occasionally lesbian participants were regularly videotaped. Friends of mine also attended the famous Tibetan videotape incident, with Vail shouting, "Okay everybody, take photographs and document it" after security locked them in the hotel room, and then finding a door and leading everyone out into the rain. But with the exception of issues about Chinese politics, the conference was a very open place, with celebrated participants from Bella Abzug to Sally Field and a lot more amazing people much less famous. I did manage to see Hillary's limousine and FBI agents in town, and the princess of Jordan came to

my hotel one night to welcome her delegation while I was having a nightcap in the lobby.

WOMEN AND TECHNOLOGY

I originally hoped to attend the Forum as part of a delegation on women in technology. Unfortunately, I couldn't find a group that was going, after talking with a number of national organizations in computing. Eventually, I decided against lugging a PowerBook or videocamera in favor of being a tourist and just listening. Since I was on vacation, I spent only a limited amount of time focused on technology. Still, the women in my group came to me proudly every time they used the internet e-mail Apple had set up at the business center, and came with me to check Netscape for U.S. news coverage of the Forum.

I attended an excellent workshop on the internet as a research tool for women's studies and women's organizations worldwide. Also a very good but frustrating seminar on mentoring women and girls in science and technology that only included scientists talking about girls majoring in the sciences. I raised the issue of women in computing, particularly women (or for that matter, men) with technical skills but nontechnical degrees and multidisciplinary interests, but ultimately felt that scientific organizations are run very differently from computer companies and have different issues. I have since gotten in touch with Women in Technology International and hope that it will be a good relationship.

There was virtually no computing or technology presence from anywhere outside North America or Africa, where technology is more often agricultural than computer based. Computing so far is a First World issue, and a white, educated First World at that. Perhaps the most notable exception was Apple Asia's corporate sponsorship of the NGO Forum (closely backed by Hewlett-Packard, China), which included sending more than 60 people to China for a month and exposing a huge number of Forum participants to internet e-mail, using the web, and trying a multimedia computer for the first time.

A woman I met from Yunnan province (who assured me that all the Chinese women at the Forum worked for the government) said

that people in China will sacrifice anything for their children. She said that several years ago it was fashionable to buy your child a piano. Today, they buy PCs, but there is very little software, especially educational software, in Chinese.

I could write about this for the next year and still not be able to express what it was like to attend this amazing event and also how hard it is to put the work we do here in perspective after ten intense days of discussing long-term global women's issues. It was strange to attend an event filled with academics and non-profit organizers and pseudo-government representatives, as if most Western women don't work primarily in corporations. In that respect, I'm glad I went as an unaffiliated "ordinary" woman.

It was wonderful to get out of the tour bus and talk with Chinese women about the issues that are important to them: being able to travel freely, liberalizing divorce laws, going to university and learning to speak other languages. Soong, our guide in Beijing, only wanted to talk cinematography, as he told us how to crop our photos for the best light; unfortunately, he had never seen most of the Chinese movies I was familiar with because they are not shown there.

From Bella Abzug's last speech at the Forum: "Beijing has given birth," she said, "to a global movement for democracy. . . new partnerships between men and women based on real equality." She hailed the Beijing Platform for Action as "the strongest statement of consensus on women's equality, empowerment and justice ever produced by governments."

"We are bringing women into politics," she said, "to change the nature of politics, to change the vision, to change the institutions. Women are not wedded to the policies of the past. We didn't craft them. They didn't let us."

In an emotional conclusion, she thanked the delegates, the U.N. and "my sisters in the NGO community." She continued: "I wish each of you well and sustainable optimism for the days ahead. Never underestimate the importance of what we are doing here. Never hesitate to tell the truth. And never, ever, give in or give up."

Women Creating a Better World

by Sherron Courneen

This article was excerpted from a speech given at the United Methodist Women's Training Days in California on January 6 and 20, 1996.

We arrived at the Beijing Airport, and the energy was so powerful I could feel it clear down to my toes and up through my legs! The power of those women coming together was a tangible thing. Even though the Chinese government, and many other governments, didn't particularly want the women of the world to meet, I knew from that energy that there was nothing — nothing — that would stop those women from coming to Beijing and Huairou to do the work that we came there to do.

Brilliantly colored, beautiful posters proclaimed a welcome to us when we arrived at the NGO Forum: "Equality, Development and Peace." We saw those same signs all during our preceding week and a half tour throughout China. Equality, development and peace. That is why we were there, and that is what we were committed to creating, to the best of our ability. Nothing could stop us, I knew, even though the powers that be were obviously threatened by those terms being applied to women. We were there to "look at the world through women's eyes," the theme of the NGO Forum, and say what we saw — or listen to what others saw, which was more the case for white, middle-class American women like me.

Now let me tell you the difference between the U.N. Conference and the NGO Forum, a difference that newspapers here did not really explain, I'm realizing. The U.N. Conference in Beijing was

made up of appointed or elected delegates. Sometimes they were women; sometimes not. You know that in many parts of the world women are not able to speak for themselves. Or, in other cases, they speak, but the men stand close by to make sure they say the right thing. The meetings are like you see on TV: kind of cold, something is read into a microphone, people are somberly dressed and polite all the time.

Boring.

Well, the NGO Forum was nothing like that. Grass-roots women, like you and me, were there because they begged or borrowed the money, because they cared deeply for women's issues, because they are in the field working closely with women and are committed to making the world a better place. These women talked and got angry and were very colorful and energetic. They spoke their minds with passion and told, sometimes for the first time, their stories. I'll refer to some of these later.

I want to explain a bit about the process leading up to these conferences. Grass-roots meetings funneled information into assemblies that were held on each continent. Then the information was compiled, and a document was developed. With that input and input from the women who attended the NGO Forum, a declaration with a Platform for Action was developed and sent on to the U.N. Conference to be finalized. I'm telling you: Women are going to change the world for women and children — and that means for men, too! It seems that finally we have had enough women in a significant mass to create significant change.

The first Conference on Women was in Mexico City in 1975, then Copenhagen in 1980, then Nairobi in 1985. In Nairobi, the "Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2000" was adopted. It became apparent after a few years, however, that not only were women's issues *not* going forward, they were in fact going *backward*! So this Conference was called in 1995. Years of meetings and communication culminated in the largest group of women ever to assemble in the history of the world. And there I was, in the airport, so excited and blessed to be there, with women

coming from all over the world — 185 countries!

It is so incredible that we in the U.S. have not seen and heard more! Or is it so incredible? From the beginning, many tried to stop us. Many are still trying to muzzle us. Have you heard that the women who attended the Forum are the greatest threat to the family in the history of civilized society? You better believe there are people, men mostly, who want us to be quiet. So there have been and will continue to be many barriers put in our way.

The fear of women's power became very obvious about three months before the Forum. You heard about that part. Many people who had planned to be at the Forum were not able to go because of the rules and regulations and garbage thrown in the way, primarily by the Chinese government. I didn't know that I had a visa until I got to the airport!

The opening ceremony for the NGO Forum was in Olympic Stadium, which easily held us all. It would have been the site of combined meetings had the Chinese not gotten scared and split the NGO Forum off from the U.N. Conference. The ceremony was lavish. The Chinese really know how to do pageantry! Women came in their native dress, and we Americans felt quite blah! Hundreds of schoolchildren put on the welcoming ceremonies. The first Women's Symphony and Chorus of Beijing sang "Ode to Joy" in Chinese. Twenty thousand peace doves were released. The song "Keep On Moving Forward" grew and swelled until we were all in tears and jumping up and down! We heard Gertrude Mongela, the African woman who was Secretary General of the Conference, say, "A revolution has begun. There is no going back. This revolution is too just, too important, and certainly long overdue!"

Media coverage of the opening ceremony was encouraged, as you might imagine. The Chinese government wanted to show off! But the issues were not really discussed there. And when they were the next day as the workshops began, there was no taping, no means to get that information out except for those who thought to bring tape recorders. They didn't even have a means to tape the plenary speakers. There was one woman from Sebastapol, California, a radio

reporter, who sought out 10 to 12 of the most representative talks and taped them with her own equipment. It is hard to say what an amazing feat that was, given the terribly inadequate site, the monsoon rains, and getting permission from speakers ahead of time.

Our purpose there was to analyze and define global issues that shape our lives, to network, and to strategize about how to hold our governments accountable

— the U.S. government included — for what they already, by and large, have agreed to do but are not doing. Speakers and worship leaders were extraordinary — capable, committed, intelligent, articulate, just like you and me! (You know, when I was writing this I realized that I must be one of those capable, committed, intelligent, articulate women, too, because I helped put on one of those workshops! Isn't it just like us to say "They are the bright ones" and not include



ourselves?) Anyway, these women were role models for me, sort of who I want to be when I grow up! These women cared. Their caring propelled them into action. They have become enlightened to the terrible plight of women and children in our patriarchal, male-dominated world, and they demand change. "Women have never really united worldwide for peace, and the day we do that, peace will come," said one plenary speaker. I believe that is true. And the fact that we have not united is something we must all question.

I am particularly interested in the role of religion in women's issues, so I initially focused on attending workshops that would help

me understand the connections between issues like sexism, racism, economics and religion. "Religious Fundamentalism and Women's Rights" and "Women's Lives: The Common Thread with Religious Fundamentalism" were examples of the workshops I attended. Three days into the conference, I was overwhelmed and shocked by the incredible violence against women that I was hearing about. So I began to also attend workshops on some of those issues that I had not heard of before: trafficking in women, genital mutilation, refugee and immigrant issues, "comfort women." I was astounded and dismayed by my own denial and lack of awareness. I began to realize how we in the U.S. are victims of a media and government in this "free country" that are determined to keep us in this nice cocoon of comfort so we don't really know what is happening in the world. And when we do get a bit of knowledge, don't we so often repress it or ignore it because it is too painful? If we really listened, we might have to do something about it — that is the crux of our denial right there. We might have to change, get involved, make people uncomfortable. We have been raised from young girls onward to please people instead of standing up, opening our mouths and fighting for justice!

I heard a woman tell her story for the first time, of how she was sold into prostitution at the age of 13 in Nepal, taken to Bombay and how she escaped. Usually, these women don't escape, and if they ever do find their way back home — if they are not murdered, die of AIDS or just disappear — they are diseased and full of shame. Some 200,000 Nepalese women are now prostitutes in India. Some are kidnapped, some go out of necessity because of poverty. Seventy percent of women in Nepal live below the poverty line. Seventy-five percent are illiterate. Women are just not important in Nepalese society. I heard it over and over again. The men are important. The women are hardly even human. For \$1,000, you can buy a motorbike in Nepal or a woman who you own and can do with whatever you want.

I heard a Korean woman tell about how her whole class of 10-to-12-year-old girls from her village was taken by the Japanese army to serve as sex slaves for the soldiers in World War II. This happened to Chinese and Filipina women as well. I saw

demonstrations by the survivors who are fighting for reparations from the Japanese government.

I heard women describe the horrific rape and torture they experienced in Bosnia, where a new phrase was born for an old, old occurrence: "Rape as an act of war." Imagine this — you are raped, perhaps as many as 50 times a day, and you become pregnant. You have no choice but to have the baby, which you carry for nine months and deliver. You love this baby, born of your body. Yet you hate this baby because every time you look at it it is the face of the enemy, the rapist. The woman who shared this through her tears told of the terrible turmoil and anguish she constantly deals with. She felt her suffering was unending, and we all cried with her.

In China, baby girls are warehoused or killed outright. There are one million fewer girls in China than there would normally be. This shortage already contributes to the trafficking of women as men buy and steal brides. It is predicted that by the year 2000 there will be roving bands of single males looking for mates. "By the end of the century, China will have

a great hoodlum army of 70 million single men," said a Shanghai newspaper.¹ An article in the *San Jose Mercury News* from January 1996 reported that China was accused of starving orphans. Interesting that the reporter never mentioned, in this otherwise excellent article, that 90% of orphans in China are girls.

Are you thinking, "It's so terrible *over there*, I'm so glad I'm here?" What about here? The U.S. is the most violent country in the



"civilized" world. The U.S. battleground is in the home. In our country, a woman is beaten every 12 seconds. That equates to nearly three million women who are battered each year. A minimum of 52% of the women who are murdered in this country are murdered by their partners.²

Now that I have created this grim picture, and it is grim, there is hope. There is the incredible energy and galvanization that has come from this Forum and others at grass-roots levels. Women are getting tired of it and are taking their God-given power and using their God-given skills to do that very Wesleyan thing: Create a better world.

A friend of mine said that "*Talking about change is the American way.*" We are so good at having meetings and talking. In many other parts of the world, they are doing something about it. On one of the interminable bus rides, I met three Muslim women from Jordan, three women just like you or me, who go into the refugee camps near them to teach the women there to read and write. They talk about the incredible stench and grinding poverty and the sickness. They don't care what religion the women are. They teach them to read and write because they know that if there is any ticket out of there, it is to read and write. They saw a need, and they are doing whatever they can to meet the need and create change.

I want to see United Methodist Women at the vanguard of that change. The potential is there. The structure is there. I want to see every UMW finding one woman who can't read or write at all or very well and teaching them how to do it.

I was told when I came into the United Methodist Church that UMW is 20 years in front of the rest of the church. Is that true? Can we make it be true? Some are in that vanguard, but some are stuck in that cocoon. Look at how many UMW responded to the Re-imagining Conference back in 1993. Women are still bickering about that conference to the point where it is to be a hot issue at our General Conference — two years after the fact! Honest analysis and women's right to do theology is sorely questioned. How are we ever going to really be able to see what is going on if we are not allowed to think or talk about it? The opposition is fierce and subtle. It uses us against

ourselves. We have more important ways to use our energy. You know, it doesn't feel real good coming out of a cocoon. Being a butterfly is fun, but becoming a butterfly takes a lot of change and hard work.

When I was at the conference, after a bad rain, tired and discouraged, I was wondering what I was doing there, how I could ever follow through on my own commitment to make change. I wandered into a concert by Gospel singer Douglas Bank, director of the Harlem Boys Choir. I listened with tears in my eyes to a song he wrote for the women there and everywhere who are working for change. It centered me in the Spirit and helped me get my priorities back on track. I leave you with his words:

"Don't ever feel I'm wasting my time.

I've come too far from where I started from.

Yet nobody told me the road would be easy.

I don't believe Jesus brought me this far to leave me.

Don't ever feel I'm wasting my time."

1. *International Newsweek*, August 28, 1995, page 12.

2. *San Jose Mercury News*, July 23, 1995, p. C1.

WANDERING AROUND THE HOTEL

After rains. A secret door opens and I move through
to the tea garden and carp
Pebbled walkways speak with pictures, symbols.

A young boy meanders
by the waterfall
Singing.

CICADAS

How is it that
silence becomes deafening?
It only takes one
to start a concert.

— by Dona Smith-Powers



Solidarity in Sisterhood

by Kaye Ashe

One of the meanings of the word "sister" is "a member of a female religious community, usually one with simple vows." In this sense, 150 sisters were among the 30,000 women gathered in Huairou at the NGO Forum. But for a long time, women religious have realized that the sisterhood is much broader than our religious communities, and we have embraced wholeheartedly the definition of sisterhood as "a belief in or feeling of unity and cooperation among women" — all women. That belief, already strong before the NGO Forum and the Fourth U.N. Conference on Women, gained a new intensity there. We were, in truth, 30,000 sisters enlightening one another; cheering one another on; grieving, dancing, plotting, praying, raging together; and transforming our pain into power. The term "sisterhood" may have faded somewhat in the vocabulary of the women's movement since the 1970s, but Robin Morgan's phrase "Sisterhood is powerful" came rushing back into my consciousness with full force as women from five continents connected and spoke to one another from their hearts.

The women religious present at the NGO Forum met together several times in order to share the thoughts and feelings that this extraordinary experience evoked in us. And we began the first of many discussions about how we might further the agenda of the Platform for Action that would emerge from the U.N. Conference, an agenda which the NGOs helped to shape. In the course of one of these meetings, women religious representing 69 congregations and organizations from around the world issued a statement to the delegates of the U.N. Conference, stating our solidarity with all of

the women participating in the Forum and the Conference. It read in part:

Our commitment to live out the Gospel impels us to raise our voices with theirs to insist that the delegates to this U.N. Conference ratify and implement a platform of action which effectively addresses the militarization, racism, structural adjustment programs, narrow fundamentalist interpretations and patriarchal structures which contribute to the feminization of poverty and do violence to women and girl children everywhere.

The signers further challenged the U.N. and other institutions to develop mechanisms of accountability to convert their commitments into concrete, measurable actions. We women religious, over the past 25 years, have been devising ways to be accountable and to translate into action our commitment to women's freedom, education, economic independence, physical and psychological health, and spiritual well-being. The commitment is articulated and tested each time we gather to pray, allocate resources, set directions, choose ministries, devise programs — in short, each time we ask ourselves what we are about.

An exhibit organized by Mary Ewens, O.P., the executive director of the Hilton Fund for Sisters, gave some idea of the work of women religious worldwide for the cause of women. The booth featured photos and printed materials sent by sisters from five continents and told in the five languages of the U.N. — English, French, Spanish, Arabic, and Chinese — the stories of sisters who, in partnership with the wider sisterhood, work with and for women in areas such as literacy, transitional and low-income housing, counseling, health, and community organization.

For each of the women religious, as for each of the thousands of women at the Forum and Conference, the experience of the events was at once uniquely personal and profoundly communal. I myself joined the 29 women who represented the CWR at Berkeley. The group brought together women of various ages, interests, ethnic backgrounds, and religious traditions and denominations. The interaction among us before, during, and after the Forum heightened and colored the level of awareness that each of us

brought to this largest single gathering of women ever held. It is only through repeated group dialogue that one is enabled to process the significance of such an emotionally charged, intellectually stimulating, and politically exciting event. I was grateful to be part of a group of women whose broad knowledge, earthy humor, and spiritual depth enriched the dialogue.

Each of us had a particular focus as we chose among the thousands of workshops that were offered. I went to ones dealing with a wide variety of topics, from female genital mutilation to the economic empowerment of women in the Sudan. My special concern, however, was women's spirituality, and there were plenty of workshops to



fuel my interest, beginning with the one presented by CWR. In all of the presentations, I heard a common longing for communion with the divine, with all of humanity, and with the earth. A Hindu woman, a Wiccan, an Hawaiian elder, Catholic theologians and

Protestant pastors, a Brazilian sociologist, a Maori community leader, and a Jewish lesbian: All expressed the same longing for wholeness, for a cure from the dualisms that plague us, for a conversion from what remains in institutional religion of misogyny, homophobia, and racism. The rituals, symbols, and storytelling that were part of these workshops became a source of new strength and new energy. That strength and energy were palpable during the circle dance that concluded the workshop presented by CWR. Led by Lucinda Nuñez, a Native American dressed in her tribe's traditional dress, we spiraled to the rhythm of her chant, ending with a wild, reverberating shout and warm, spontaneous embraces.

Each workshop, every demonstration, deepened my conviction that women, given comprehensive, authentic equality with men, have the potential to transform the world. Women's insight, resilience, and courage, and our sense of the exquisite web that connects all of creation give hope that we can overcome the cynicism and paralysis that permeate the political atmosphere. Susan Griffin experienced that hope in Beijing. She writes:

For those who went to the conference in Beijing. . . something momentous occurred, not the immediate shifting of governmental bodies, but a rising of spirits, despite the odds, in the creation of a different arena, defined in different ways by women all over the world; another possible world began, if even temporarily, to exist and this has nurtured desire and imagination.¹

Desire and imagination can be kept alive through a spiritual quest that is grounded in women's history and women's experience, and expressed in an idiom congenial to women. That journey is one means of sustaining us in the search for new and effective ways to address the challenges so painstakingly and eloquently delineated in the Platform for Action. Grassroots feminist organizations are another means. They offer alternative ways of seeing, thinking, and acting, and invite us to translate our spiritual insights into political and social action. In Huairou and Beijing, we saw up close the global impact of such organizations.

As we look beyond Beijing, then, it is my hope that women religious will join women everywhere in creating symbols and rituals

that will inspire us to dismantle everything that stifles women, distorts relationships, and threatens the planet. I hope, further, that in our person and through our congregations we will continue to increase our support of women's, and specifically feminist, organizations: research centers, support groups, health centers, study programs, bookstores, theater groups, battered women's shelters, and rape crisis centers. Finally, I hope that more and more we will "look at the world through women's eyes," inviting our churches and all of those invested in the work of justice to introduce the gender perspective into every human endeavor. How do peace and war, economic, monetary, and legal systems, education, the media, government, corporate, and church policies affect women? How can women enter more fully into these realms and help to transform them?

As I ask these questions, so many women's faces return to my mind's eye: the faces of Iraqi women shouting for the release of war prisoners, the face of a young African woman clothed in a vest demanding "Gender Equality Now," the faces of Cypriot and Turkish women who danced together as they sought humane solutions to the long-standing hostility between their people, the faces of lesbians demonstrating joyously and boisterously through the streets of Huairou. The energy, power, and beauty, the playfulness, creativity, and openness, the intelligence, determination, and hope reflected in those faces were on constant display at the Forum and Conference. These are the qualities that will carry us beyond Beijing and "... enable us to imagine the worlds we would like to inhabit, the long lives we will share, and the many futures in our hands."²

1 "To Love the Marigold: The Politics of Imagination," *Whole Earth Review* (Spring 1996), 61-67.

2 *Ibid.*, 67.

Ten Years Later: Lesbian Visibility and New Patterns for Peace in the Middle East

by Barbara Zoloth

Ever since I returned from the NGO Forum, my thoughts and dreams have been filled with the women I saw there — women in every kind of national dress, from every country, women very busy connecting with one another. The intensity of the experience will be with me for a long time.

In 1985, when I attended the NGO Forum of the Third World Conference on Women in Nairobi, I was awed by the magnificence and excitement of being among 12,000 women from literally every corner of the globe, all working for a truly better world. Based on that experience alone, I knew I had to join the NGO women going to China this year. I also knew it would be different from the conference 10 years ago, but I wasn't sure how.

The most profound personal difference for me at this 1995 NGO Forum was the visibility of lesbians. The 1985 conference had no official lesbian presence, although, as a result of lobbying by a group of European lesbians, two lesbian workshops were eventually added to the schedule. The 1995 conference started out altogether differently. The International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Council (IGLHRC) and other organizations had been working for two years on the issue of lesbian visibility for the 1995 conference. Before the conference began, the following had already happened:

- ◆ Lesbians were identified by the NGO Forum organizers as one of seven "diversity" groups to be given their own area and

an official Lesbian Tent was provided.

◆ The draft version of the Platform for Action to be discussed and ultimately adopted by the official U.N. Conference contained four separate references to protection of rights on the basis of "sexual orientation."

◆ About a dozen lesbians obtained official observer status at the U.N. Conference to lobby delegates on behalf of lesbian rights.

At this NGO Forum, lesbians were quite visible. A group of five young, dynamic and energetic lesbians formed the organizing committee of the Lesbian Tent. These women represented countries all over the world and included one woman from Soweto (whom I later saw on CNN addressing the U.N. Conference on lesbian rights) and another from Thailand. Daily schedules included lesbian events and workshops.

Many women, including myself, wore a button throughout the 10 days proclaiming "Lesbian Rights are Human Rights" (brought to the Forum by IGLHRC).



At least two lesbian demonstrations were held where women marched around the Forum site, which was quite spread out, carrying signs and chanting things like "Liberté, Egalité, Homosexualité." Plenary sessions regularly included "out" lesbians as key panel members. When heterosexual speakers talked about the need to eliminate racism and sexism, they also referred to homophobia. A session on lesbian organizing efforts and strategies

around the world was held in one of the large auditoriums with simultaneous translation provided in six languages.

I don't mean to suggest that lesbians were fully accepted by everyone. Representatives of fundamentalism, both Christian and Muslim, objected to our presence, recognition, and outspokenness. References to sexual orientation in the draft version of the Platform for Action did not survive the final negotiations. Nevertheless, for the first time in history, lesbian rights were discussed at the U.N. level. Norway's Prime Minister, in her rousing closing speech to the U.N. Conference, expressed her disappointment that the final document failed to include sexual orientation. The governments of Canada, South Africa, Israel, the United States, and the Scandinavian countries were among those supporting explicit recognition of lesbian rights.

Although much work remains to be done, we have come so much farther than ever before. The progress was evident and undeniable.

I know that Chinese security and harassment by Chinese officials received much press coverage in the U.S. As usual, the media sought out conflict and controversy, and most of what they reported did, in fact, happen. Chinese language literature was removed from the Lesbian Tent. Chinese videographers continued taking pictures of people in the Lesbian Tent, after being asked to stop, by using telephoto lenses from neighboring tents. Chinese officials were present at every workshop (not just the lesbian workshops) taking notes and/or videotapes. Nevertheless, although these activities created some disruptions and annoyances, the basic activities of workshops, panel discussions, networking, and sharing ideas were not stopped. The women continued their work despite the obstacles. This, of course, is not news.

Two other characteristics of this conference also stood out for me. At the 1985 Nairobi conference, conflict was frequently evident between Muslim and non-Muslim women concerning the status of women in Islam. At this conference, however, the major discussions on this topic were among Muslim women. Non-Muslim women were observers to this conversation. Fundamentalist Muslim women

defended their way of life, and feminist Muslim women (some of them living in exile) protested the way women are treated in Islam. I found this conversation most educative for me and very encouraging.

The other event that moved me deeply concerned the Middle East. At the 1985 conference, I attended a dialogue between an Israeli woman and a Palestinian woman, both working in their respective peace movements and both stretching themselves in what were clearly difficult and painful ways so that they could, in that moment, truly connect with one another. On my last day at the China conference, I attended a presentation by The Jerusalem Link, a 6-year-old organization of Israeli and Palestinian women who clearly have the deepest respect and love for each other. The women (including two members of the Israeli Parliament) discussed with the audience their astoundingly successful peace-making efforts. The movement for peace between Israelis and Palestinians has, without doubt, been led by the women. They were the first to jointly agree on the need for mutual recognition, for a separate Palestinian state, and for the sharing of Jerusalem. In 1969, a Belgian woman had offered both her country as a neutral territory in which they could meet and herself as a facilitator for their negotiations. These women have been working together ever since. Their passion, intelligence, and success stories made it clear to all of us that they have figured out what is needed to successfully work toward a lasting peace. This was one of the most hopeful events of the Forum for me.

I am tremendously grateful to have twice had the opportunity to attend and participate in two World Conferences on Women. Each time I have returned with deepened respect and admiration for the women of the world, for the work we do, and for the critical importance of that work to the survival of our planet.

In the Court of Women

by Victoria Rue

My name is Imara. I live in a refugee camp on the Lebanese border with Israel. I am Palestinian. I was the middle child of five. Let me tell you my story.

Huairou, China:

I was seated in "The Court of Women," a tribunal held each day of the NGO Forum to hear crimes committed globally against women. There were approximately 400 women in the hot auditorium this day. Others who would speak would be a nurse from Bosnia testifying about the rapes of Muslim women by the Serbs, and a Filipina testifying about the continuous rapes she had endured by the Japanese during World War II as a "comfort woman."

Imara, on crutches, waved away helping hands and climbed the three stairs to the stage. She wore a chador. Her face was uncovered. I imagine that she was in her early 30s. She read from a prepared text. I listened on headphones as her Arabic was translated into English, French, Chinese, and Spanish. As she read, her voice would break as she fought to maintain control of her tears. She would wait a few moments in silence until she was able to continue. Then she would begin to read again.

Without a tape recorder, what is written here is my memory of Imara's story.

One morning, three Israeli soldiers banged on the door of our house. My mother and the two youngest children, a boy and girl, ran and hid in the bathroom. The soldiers

were shouting; they did not speak our language. My father did not want to open the door. The soldiers broke the door. They shouted at my father and two brothers. Then they shot them. Then they shot me, in the legs. They were laughing. Then they left. I could see my father lying on the floor and hear him crying. I knew my brothers were dead. I passed out.

I awoke when I heard soldiers laughing. They had come back. They were laughing. They kept shouting at my father. Then they raped me. When they were done with me, they shot and killed my father. They came over to me, and one of them shot me in the head. I don't know how long I was unconscious.

It was dark when I awoke. I heard someone coming in the house. I thought it was the soldiers coming back again. He lit a match. It was a soldier. He saw me on the floor. He moved toward me. I began to cry and shake. He took off his jacket and covered me. Then I passed out again. When I awoke, I was being picked up and put in a car. I passed out. In the hospital, they operated on me. I was paralyzed from the waist down. They told me there was nothing else they could do for me, but that if I could get to Gaza, there was a better hospital that could help me.

I was put in a car with a driver and a nurse. When we came to the border, the driver told me to cover myself with the blanket. When we were stopped, I heard Israeli soldiers talking and laughing. I recognized the voices and the laughter. They were the same soldiers who had entered our house. I began shaking. They shot the nurse. When they found me, they laughed. They raped me. When they were done, they left me for dead. I passed out. I awoke as the driver was picking me up from the ground. He carried me from the highway to the ocean. We sat there until nightfall. Then he carried me back to the hospital in Lebanon. I stayed in the hospital for several months. Now I live in the refugee camp where my family was shot.

Imara finished. There was only the weeping and moaning of many women. As Imara began to negotiate the stairs with her crutches, women leapt to their feet with cries of "Imara, Imara, Imara." So many emotions swirling colliding choking in each of us.

Four years ago in 1992, in collaboration with Emily Shihadeh, I created a play about Emily's life. We called it "Grapes and Figs Are In Season: A Palestinian Woman's Story." Emily performs the play with a guitarist. It chronicles her life as a Palestinian growing up in Ramallah, Palestine/Israel and moving to the U.S. Through the play, we come to understand through Emily's eyes the great pain of survival of the Palestinian people. We also witness the power of compassion, as Emily realizes her best friends in the U.S. are Jews.

Four years have passed since we created "Grapes and Figs." Emily has toured the play throughout the United States. In November of 1996, we will tour the play to Andover-Newton, Yale Divinity School, Union Theological Seminary (NY), and the University of Massachusetts.

The urgent cry for peace rings in our ears again through Imara's story. The moan of so many women's bodies shot at, raped, tortured are the texts upon which this peace is written.

The Action is the Prayer: A Backward Look at the Women's Conference in China

by Sandy Boucher

Moments stand out with crystal clarity.

That swift inbreath as the Tibetan women filed out of the shelter of the Peace Tent and walked in slow single file. We followed, holding umbrellas, under the onslaught of a steady rain. The Tibetans were small women, and few, just the nine who had managed to get into China from the other countries where they now live. They wore the traditional "chuba" or long Tibetan dress, and over their mouths were tied scarves marked with the sunburst logo of the Forum. Silent, they walked, then stood, and were soon besieged by an army of photographers.

Their gesture dramatized the Chinese refusal to let them speak of the 40-year occupation of Tibet by China, in which a sixth of the Tibetan population has died, over 6000 Buddhist monasteries have been destroyed, and the forests and wildlife decimated. Their silence protested the forced sterilization of Tibetan women, the imprisonment of Tibetan Buddhist nuns. To stand there with these Tibetan women in that deluge was to share their determination and their fear, to see the trembling of their shoulders, their tears mixed with the rain.

The prospect for Tibetan independence seemed a lot more shaky to me on Chinese soil than it had back in the Bay Area. I felt the sheer weight and power of those 1.2 billion Chinese people. And my reading of the English-language *China Daily* impressed me with the

brazenness and relentlessness of the Chinese propaganda machine. I wondered how tiny Tibet, without the help of any foreign power, could ever shake off such a giant.

Some members of my delegation from CWR stood with the Tibetan women. We had been preparing for many months for our trip to the NGO Forum. We hoped, along with others, to bring a spiritual dimension to the gathering. And we found that at the conference "spirit" was palpable.

I felt it in the willingness of women to breach painful longstanding divisions in order to communicate as human beings. I sat in a tent with Korean women and Japanese women and heard two Japanese who had been 12-year-olds during World War II speak of how only now are they learning of the actions of their government and army in Asia.

I watched an old Korean woman describe the life of a "comfort woman" in World War II. Snatched from the street when she was an 18-year-old schoolgirl, she was taken to a Japanese army camp where she was imprisoned in a room, raped, and forced to "service" 30 or more Japanese soldiers a day. She tried to kill herself, didn't succeed, and had to exist in this hell for years. (Some women were kept as sexual slaves by the Japanese army for up to nine years.) The women who survived the war and were able to return to their native lands were so dishonored, demoralized and often diseased that a return to normal life was not possible for them.

In the tent, the Japanese women and the Korean supporters of the comfort women talked to each other. Their encounter was not perfect: conflict surfaced, no resolution was reached. But their impulse of wanting to understand, to make right, evoked a dimension of spirit. The women's willingness to look into the dark places of the human soul touched something vulnerable in everyone there.

While experiences like this one sparked hope, the NGO Forum as a whole drew into sharp perspective some tendencies that seem challenging at best, scary and discouraging at their worst. The women in my delegation—ministers, divinity students, nuns, a Jew, a Native American woman—are social activists who understand the

interpenetration of spirituality with social and political awareness. They were most struck by two overwhelming, interlinked issues very present at the conference: the globalization of the economy and the rise of conservatism, religious, economic and social.

Women from the Third World or what is now termed "the South" spoke of the "structural adjustment" within each nation that is necessitated by the development of the world free market. This economic restructuring, they said, tends to draw funds away from social services and support for the poor, who are to a great extent women and children.

Sitting in a packed auditorium in Huairou, I heard Nighat Said Khan, an activist from Pakistan, warn of the political, economic and ideological forces orchestrating the changes in the world today. She called this



movement "a new imperialism in the guise of internationalism that purports to be inclusive . . . when in fact these are articulations and institutions of a monolithic economic and political process designed to conserve its power." The world trade order, or world plan, or regional cooperation or free market offers, she said, "the freedom to compete . . . in an *unequal situation*. For the dice have already been played and the rules already set."

Listening, I thought of the MacDonald's hamburger concession that I passed at least once a day at the conference. In front of this red and yellow always-crowded tent, on a park bench, sat a plastic life-size figure of Ronald MacDonald with his silly grin and thick red hair, one arm stretched out along the back of the bench. Sometimes when

I passed, a group of women would have joined him to have their picture taken. In their saris or other colorful garb, these women of "the South" stood behind him or sat within his embrace, smiling into the camera.

Nighat Said Khan reminded us that the six billion dollars that the United States gave to her own nation of Pakistan was used to establish the "Islamicization" of the state, that is, to consolidate power in the hands of Muslims. This Islamicization, or fundamentalist Christianity, or rigid Vatican control, was the second great theme of the conference that concerned my delegation. In response to a rapidly changing, insecure, violent world, human beings often turn to the most rigid belief systems, we realized. And these systems always enact measures to control women.

Islamic women spoke loudly and often at the NGO Forum. When we think Muslim, we think Middle East, and certainly many women from the Middle East came to the conference. But I was reminded that a good proportion of the 500 million Muslim women live in Africa.

In a workshop of Black African Muslim women, many contradictory feelings emerged. The speakers on the panel described women's respected and protected place in Muslim society, as guaranteed by the Qur'an. (Interestingly, the woman who painted the rosiest picture of Muslim women's lives was a white woman, originally British, who had lived in Nigeria for 30 years.) But other African women stood to tell a different story, a Nigerian speaking of women's poverty and illiteracy in the Muslim world, a Sudanese refugee telling of women flogged by Muslim men for the slightest deviation from the required female behavior. A young lawyer from Tanzania pointed to the conflict between Islamic law and common law. An Indian woman spoke of Muslim women's oppression in Hindu India. A refugee from Afghanistan characterized the Islamicization of her country as "cultural imperialism" by neighboring Islamic states.

Critics of Islam's treatment of women, like theologian Dr. Riffat Hassan, go back to the source. She states that the Qur'an nowhere prescribes the inferiority of women, but that the Hadith, the

commentaries on the Qur'an, are the source of such passages.

In a well-publicized alliance, the Vatican and Islam have joined forces to control women through denial of reproductive rights and the promotion of homophobia. Some of the Islamic women at the conference vehemently objected to the inclusion of lesbian rights in the U.N. document, as did Catholic and fundamentalist Christian women.

Lulled into complacency by the tolerance of my own Bay Area, I was surprised at the open expression of anti-lesbian feeling. In Huairou I felt the hatred directed at us. And the Chinese response to lesbians bordered on hysteria. Everyone heard the rumors in China that lesbians and prostitutes, all infected with AIDS, would stage a nude demonstration at the conference site. A Chinese security man diligently filmed the workshop given by the lesbians in our delegation. When it was time for questions, he asked whether we had made contact with any Chinese lesbians!

On a visit to the Lesbian Tent one day, I was asked by a Chinese woman delegate to tell her what the women at the front were talking about, as her English was not quite adequate to follow their discussion. I helped her out, reporting a rather innocuous conversation about how to talk to the press. Then she said, "Oh, so those are the representatives of the lesbians." I didn't quite get what she meant. "They're lesbians," I told her. Her eyes bugged. "*They're lesbians!*?" And she leapt straight up from her chair, gasped for air, gazed around in panic, plopped back down, and leaned toward me. "No," she objected, "*they can't be!*" "Yes, they're lesbians." "Every one of them?" "Yes, every one." I looked at the women up in front, a fairly normal-looking group of youngish women from the West, Thailand, South Africa. My companion persisted: "But that one is very pretty, she could find a man to marry!"

Feeling how vulnerable we all are, as women, as well as lesbians, later that day I heard speakers tell of violence against women in Bosnia, of Algerian women abducted, raped and murdered by fundamentalist groups fighting the government. Others described the

sex trafficking, sex tourism and prostitution that enslaves women and children throughout the world in peacetime as well as war.

Again and again, through workshops on older women, on the economics of women's lives, on the realities of political and religious oppression and women's attempts to influence government policies, I came to a sobering conclusion. Ironically, here at the NGO Forum, in a gathering of the women thinkers and activists most passionately committed to progressive change, our lack of power, in every country in the world, was brought strongly home to me. The U.N.'s own statistics were mirrored here: Women, representing 50% of the world population and one-third of the official labor force, perform nearly two-thirds of all working hours, receive only one-tenth of the world income and own less than 1% of world property.

But the passion and resilience of the Forum participants shone a many-faceted light on these grim statistics. Their determination wove a sense of spiritual strength through all the words spoken.

In the "Celebrating Womanspirit" workshop that my delegation presented, the participants brought forth many instances of this powerful spirituality. Most of all I remember the woman from Cyprus who described a sacred grove in her own land. The grove, on a hill tilting down into the Mediterranean, was famous for its density and beauty and because it grew right down into the blue waters. When the Turks invaded Cyprus they set these trees on fire. The Greek Cypriot woman described watching the grove burning, the smoke billowing as it fell to ashes.

One day in a tent at the conference site, a Cypriot woman showed me their display of photographs and text. She told me how Cyprus had been split by the Turks into two zones, and many of the Greek Cypriots had been kicked out of the "Turkish zone." She and her husband had been forced to leave on a day's notice with nothing but a few possessions. She showed me photographs of the women's protest in which the demonstrators had tried to cross over into their old territory; the photographs showed images of Turkish soldiers pushing and beating the women.

And finally, she, a middle-aged woman, intelligent and outraged,

told me how she had gone to visit the church where she had formerly worshipped, now destroyed by bombs and off-limits. In the ruins of the church she had been arrested by Turkish soldiers, taken to jail and tortured. Reaching into her purse she pulled out a packet of photographs. In the photos her upper arms, thighs and back bore enormous puffy purplish bruises, painful even to look at. I murmured my horror. Her eyes held mine, and she asked even as she knew neither of us had the answer, "Why would anyone do this to a woman!"

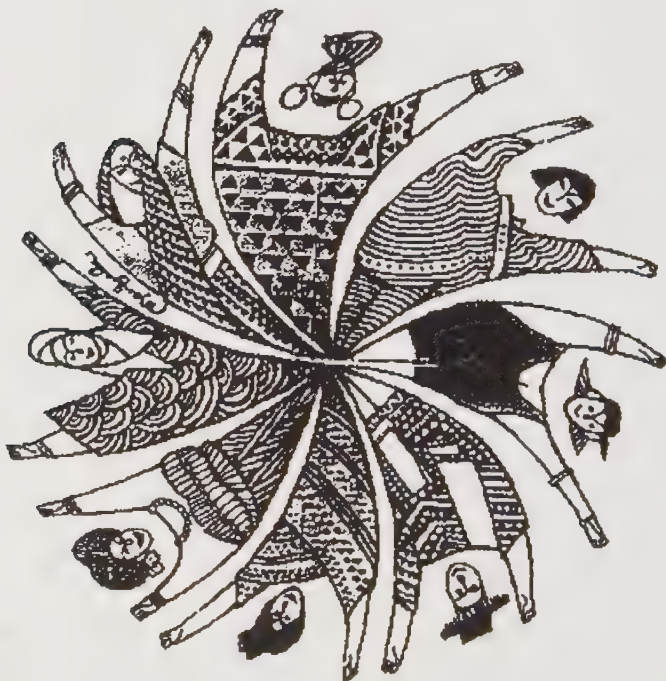
Two nights later we came to the Cyprus tent for a party. The tent was ringed with tables laden with plates of excellent cheese, bread, and many bottles of wine. In the center, the Cypriot women, dressed in their traditional long dresses and headscarves, danced to the music of their country. They were beautiful, proud of themselves as women and of themselves as Cypriots. The music throbbed and spiraled upward as they drew us into the dance, taught us the steps, linked arms with us and led us in a jubilant celebration of just being alive. Among them was the woman who had shown me the photographs, dancing with abandon, her arms in the air, hands clasped with her sisters'.

All these moments. All this spirit. And now, back in my relatively comfortable East Bay life, as I ask myself the inevitable questions about political activism, about spiritual practice, I am informed by all the words spoken at the conference, but also by the dancing bodies of the Cypriots, the brave determined presence of the Tibetan women. And I remember Judith McDaniel, the American Friends Service Committee activist, writer and teacher who participated with us, saying of the juncture between the spiritual and the political, "The action is the prayer." I saw that the spiritual yearnings and gifts of the women at the NGO Forum shine through the projects they pursue, live in the everyday acts they make for justice.

A month after our return, my delegation met at the CWR house to check in. Each of us told her most significant experiences at the conference. Almost everyone said, "I am changed by having been there," or "I feel very different about myself as a woman and about women in the world." Spirit, scholarly work, political awareness, our

identities as women—all this met and coalesced at the NGO Forum. Already we have met several times to begin addressing the U.N. Platform for Action, to find ways to implement this document in our own Bay Area communities. Each of us has made a commitment to continue informing ourselves of women's progress worldwide while working here at home on whatever piece of the puzzle is accessible to us. Transforming, enlightening, strengthening: the echoes of the conference will ring out in our thought, issue in our action for many years to come.

This article was first published in Mama Bear's News and Notes, volume 13, no.3, April-May-June 1996.



Different Voices

by Vail Weller

These are snippets of conversations from the NGO Forum, remembered and recorded, by CWR delegation member Vail Weller:

VOICE 1:

I knew that the Forum would be an international marketplace. A number of us got together and created by hand these lizards, made of beads. Selling the lizards would pay for my trip to China. I unexpectedly had to pay an extra tax to get them into the country, and I was told I would have to pay again to get them out and back into Africa. No worry — I knew they'd sell quickly.

Once there, I found that there were so many vendors selling so many things! My lizards were not doing very well. I stood in the vendor area for the first day. Then the second. Then the third. I still had a huge pile of the lizards. I had to sell them in order to get home!

On the fourth day, a woman from North America, the state of California, was visiting with me as I stood there, selling the lizards. When she found out that I hadn't yet been to a workshop or a lecture, she insisted that she would sell the lizards. "Go to the conference!" she said. "You are here! You must go to the conference!"

She helped me by taking turns with me for the rest of that week. At the end of the Forum, she bought the rest of my beaded lizards and took them back to California, where she said she would sell them at a place called the Ashby Flea Market.

VOICE 2:

We all knew about the Women's Forum. We had heard a lot of things about the women that would be coming. All I knew was that I

wanted to meet the women from around the world! What could I possibly have to offer? I am a student here in Beijing city. I am no politician.

Then it dawned on me. I could volunteer to help give people directions, answer their questions. I would need to know another language to do this. So I taught myself English.

This is how you came to meet me here, in the Global Pavilion, handing out maps. Everyone is so busy — not many people have stopped by. I am very glad to talk to you.

VOICE 3:

Yes, I did. I demonstrated along with the women who were protesting the Japanese government's use of so-called "comfort women" during World War II.

No, I wasn't one of those unfortunate women. I almost was, though. I was in the ninth grade. Our class was made up exclusively at this point of girls, because the boys were trying to earn money for their families while their fathers fought in the war. I excused myself to go to the bathroom. When I came back, my classroom was empty. All of the girls had been taken — just like that — into the service of the government. They became "comfort women." They were still girls!

So yes. I stood in solidarity with those women who were demonstrating.

VOICE 4:

I just have to say it. I know that you are from the United States, but I need to tell you that I think that the citizens there demonstrate consumerism of the worst kind.

In my village in Africa, a woman will work for one year to earn the money to buy a pair of sandals. Some people in your country feel that they NEED a television? Or a second television? Or a third?

VOICE 5:

Now I know how a drop of rain feels when it joins the ocean.

Litany: a Woman's Creed

adapted by Selisse Berry

This litany was adapted by Selisse Berry from a piece written by Robin Morgan, in collaboration with Mahnaz Afkhami, Diane Faulkner, Perdita Huston, Corinne Kumar, Paola Melchiori, Sunetra Puri, and Sima Wali at the "Women's Global Strategies Meeting," Nov. 29 - Dec. 2, 1994, sponsored by the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO) and attended by 148 women from 50 countries. Selisse has used the litany in the presentations she's done since returning from Beijing.

Reader 1: We are female human beings poised on the edge of the new millennium. We are the majority of our species, yet we have dwelt in the shadow. We are the invisible, the illiterate, the laborers, the refugees, the poor.

ALL: And we vow: No more.

Reader 2: We are the women who hunger — for rice, home, freedom, each other, ourselves.

Reader 3: We are the women who thirst — for clean water and laughter, literacy, love.

Reader 4: We have existed at all times, in every society. We have survived femicide. We have rebelled — and left clues.

Reader 2: We are continuity, weaving future from past, logic with lyric. We are the women who stand in our sense and shout "yes."

Reader 1: We are the women who wear broken bones, voices, minds, hearts — but we are the women who dare whisper "no."

Reader 6: We are the women whose souls no fundamentalist cage can contain.

Readers 2 & 6: We are the women who refuse to permit the sowing of death in our gardens, air, rivers, seas.

Reader 3: We are each precious, unique, necessary. We are strengthened and blessed and relieved at not having to all be the same. We are the daughters of longing. We are the mothers in labor to birth the politics of the 21st century.

Readers 3 & 4: We are the women men warned us about.

Reader 4: We are the women who know that all issues are ours, who will reclaim our wisdom, reinvent our tomorrow, question and redefine everything, including power.

Reader 6: We have worked now for decades to name the details of our need, rage, hope, vision. We have broken our silence, exhausted our patience. We are weary of listing refrains on our suffering — to entertain or be simply ignored. We are done with vague words and real waiting; famished for action, dignity, joy. We intend to do more than merely endure and survive.

Reader 5: They have tried to deny us, define us, defeat us, denounce us; to jail, enslave, exile, gas, rape, beat, burn, bury — and bore us. Yet nothing, not even the offer to save their failed system, can grasp us.

Reader 1: For thousands of years, women have had responsibility without power — while men have had power without responsibility. We offer those men who risk being brothers a balance, a future, a hand.

ALL: But with or without them, we will go on.

Reader 3: For we are the Old Ones, the New Breed, the Natives who came first but lasted, indigenous to an utterly different dimension. We are the girl-child in Zambia, the grandmother in Burma, the women in El Salvador and Afghanistan, Finland and Fiji. We are whale-song and rainforest; the depth-wave rising huge to shatter glass power on the shore; the lost and despised who, weeping, stagger into the light.

Reader 6: All this we are. We are intensity, energy, the people speaking — who no longer will wait and who cannot be stopped.

Reader 2: We are poised on the edge of the millennium — ruin behind us, no map before us, the taste of fear sharp on our tongues.

Readers 4 & 6: Yet we will leap.

Reader 4: The exercise of imagining is an act of creation.

Readers 4 & 5: The act of creation is an exercise of will.

ALL: All this is political. And possible.

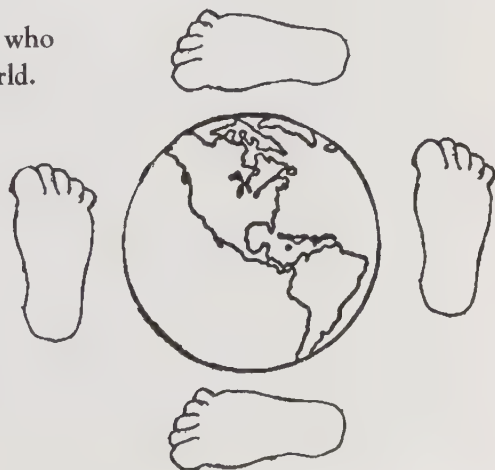
Reader 6: Bread. A clean sky. Active peace. A woman's voice singing somewhere, melody drifting like smoke from the cookfires. The army disbanded, the harvest abundant. The wound healed, the child wanted, the prisoner freed, the body's integrity honored, the lover returned. The magical skill that reads marks into meaning. The labor equal, fair, and valued. Delight in the challenge for consensus to solve problems. No hand raised in any gesture but greeting. Secure interiors — of heart, home, land — so firm as to make secure borders irrelevant at last. And everywhere laughter, care, celebration, dancing, contentment. A humble, earthly paradise, in the now.

Reader 1: We will make it real, make it our own, make policy, history, peace, make it available, make mischief, a difference, love, the connections, the miracle, ready.

ALL: Believe it.

ALL: We are the women who
will transform the world.

The illustration at right was drawn by 13-year-old Jessica Kubik for the California Women's Agenda meeting. Jessica is the daughter of CWR delegation member Nancy Kubik.



Creating CWR's Base Community

by Elizabeth Fisher

The NGO Women's Forum was a life-changing experience for many in the CWR delegation. They found the international women's movement to be a grassroots phenomenon not orchestrated from a central or dominant authority but rather fueled by nodes of activity around the globe.

After our return, reporting about the delegation's activities at the Forum and relaying impressions of what was experienced there initially captured the enthusiasm, time and attention of delegation members. Soon, many who had gone to the Forum as well as some of those who had not traveled to Beijing but had heard the report-backs, realized they wanted to do more. The need for an ongoing approach at CWR that would dynamically foster a combination of personal growth and compassionate service, supported by a committed community, became evident.

The Platform for Action produced by the U.N. Conference seemed to be the logical starting point. Promoting a holistic and integrated perspective, the Platform is comprised of 12 critical areas of concern agreed to by 189 countries. These areas, viewed from the perspective of women, include: poverty, education and training, health, violence, armed conflict, the economy, women in power and decision-making, institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, human rights, media, environment and the girl-child. Often during the Forum, participants were reminded that for the strategic objectives and actions that make up the Platform to become more than a hollow wish list, they must be incorporated into their lives and work.

The CWR delegation searched for ways to bring Beijing home. Several meetings took place in the early months of 1996 to discuss the format for an appropriate follow-up effort. The delegation decided to create a base community, loosely patterned after communities that combine a faith perspective with their work for social justice. This community would bring together women and men from the Graduate Theological Union and the wider religious community for reflection, support, education and action around the Platform.

The effort at CWR, all agreed, should be nourishing to our individual spirits as well as provide a vehicle for overt political action. A desire to combine the supportive activities of creative ritual, shared perspectives, joy and laughter, and effective action was overwhelmingly expressed. Because of the diversity of theology within the CWR constituency, those participating committed themselves to keeping the sharing as inclusive as possible, while emphasizing a sense of the universal spirit informing their work for compassionate justice.

The first step toward creating this community was to offer an educational seminar entitled "Gender Justice: Women's Rights are Human Rights" taught by myself. (I am also the co-author of the written version of this workshop series, which will be available from the Unitarian Universalist Service Committee in the fall of 1996.) Fifteen women gathered for two full Saturdays to explore the Platform through activities such as role plays, discussions, and participatory exercises. The Rev. Sherron Courneen, a Methodist minister who was a member of the CWR delegation and attended this seminar, then taught the workshop series to a group in San Jose. Several who attended these classes also became interested in participating in CWR's base community.

In June, a delegation of women and girls affiliated with CWR attended the California Women's Agenda (CAWA) meeting, along with over 400 participants, in San Francisco. Representatives from organizations addressing areas of concern from the Beijing Platform convened to draft their own Platform for Action that dealt with these issues as they are experienced in California. The CWR delegation was particularly interested in representing aspects of religion that speak to these areas, as well as exploring how religious denominations

can be mobilized to address these problems. Attending this assembly allowed CWR participants to engage in wider dialogue, offering religious perspectives when appropriate, and to learn about the work being done by other groups interested in the Platform's areas of concern.

Further planning to widen the circle of the base community will begin in the fall of 1996. A core group of those interested in designing the future of the CWR base community will develop programming to begin in January, 1997. Small focus groups offering a mix of emotional, educational and action support, as well as larger educational events, are being considered.

Because the GTU community is fluid, part of the plan is to organize an effective means to retain the interest of CWR members not located in the Bay Area through long-distance exchanges. New and old technologies such as e-mail, phone and the postal service will be used intentionally to foster an extended community.

This multifaceted program will be coordinated by Elizabeth Fisher and Sherron Courneen and is open to all who are interested. The hope is that those who want to deepen and widen their religious commitment to positive social change, particularly the plight of women and girls, will discover a nurturing network through CWR.

For more information about The CWR Base Community Project, contact Liz Fisher at:

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We Turn at the Sound of the Word, "Beijing"

by Kathryn Poethig

At first it was easy to return. We were fired up; we had touched the global and had become its disciples. Our hair like Moses, our eyes ablaze with passion, we talked in the dark illumined by slides. We retold our stories until they became apocryphal. There were the early tales and the later tales. There were conversions. This was the beginning of a canon.

And now, there was a nation of women to reach; at the very least Oakland. By estimate, our delegation has given 130 presentations to 2000 women.

We returned with slides — thousands. Women from many nations had brought with them tapestries intended to link the NGO coliseum in Beijing to the U.N. Conference building several miles away. (The glorious plan was foiled by our move to Huairou.) If the slides of North American women were set side by side we could build a Kodachrome geodesic dome over the United States.

What were we yearning for there that brought us to such fervor? We were activist women, yes, but few had worked on U.N. programs or knew the Platform for Action. We were, I believe, in search of a mythical historical event — an immense global gathering of women — to renew us in our daily struggles in advanced capitalist America. In search of the global, we found its exotic particularities. At that marketplace of issues, stories were the wealth with which we bartered. And sometimes our stories were weighed into the exchange. They were used as object lessons, indictments, and koans. Through them,

we were inducted into the intricacies of relation — rape as a war crime in Bosnia, Korea, Rwanda.

Perhaps as U.S. women, we wanted to be embraced by a family in which we were not the ugly stepsister. But Robin Morgan's claim that *Sisterhood is Global* had not been well-received by other feminisms skeptical of an unreflective global sisterhood. In the 1990s, who can speak of a global feminism that is undifferentiated and unstratified? There were moments during the NGO Forum, though, when its simplicity seduced us. Aren't we the world? Don't we hold up half the sky everywhere? It is standard to claim a globalized consciousness of the "world as one place." But whose sky, which place? Our own country grumbled at our Chinese hosts. And whose stories were told and in what language? The U.N. global village was conducted in English and willing translators were everywhere. We watched a replay of the day on CNN in the evening from our hotel rooms. Globalization standardizes, and those of us who benefit from its preferences must keep in mind that its standards are local, not universal.

We returned with these global epiphanies, our stories left behind in exchange for someone else's. At first it was easy to believe we had been changed. Then the tales began to tell on us. We cannot live by words alone; we need bread and sometimes stones. The local moments of the global must root or wither. We returned to our work. A few months after our transfiguration in Huariou, we began to see the evidence of this new seed. Some fell in love. Some new friendships have changed and sustained us. One found she had cancer, but finished a book. Some tried to keep connected and then were swallowed up by commitments. Some just went back to organizing, but with added dimensions. Yes, some fell away, disappeared from us. But some became apostles to the message of the women's conference.

A year later, we bustle in our local-is-global worlds. We turn at the sound of the word, *Beijing*, and, yes, we remember.

Biographies

Kaye Ashe, author of *Today's Woman, Tomorrow's Church*, is a Sinsinawa Dominican who served as Prioress of her congregation from 1986 to 1994. Her doctoral studies at the University of Fribourg brought her into close contact with Mary Daly — a wild and mind-expanding experience. Sr. Ashe is currently living in Berkeley, where she is completing a book on the feminization of the church.

Selisse Berry is a graduate of San Francisco Theological Seminary. She served as the National Coordinator for Christian Lesbians Out Together (CLOUT) from 1991-95. She currently resides in San Francisco with her partner Deborah.

Sandy Boucher is a writer and teacher in Oakland. She earned an M.A. at the Starr King School for Ministry in 1990. Her new book *Opening the Lotus: What Women Want to Know About Buddhism* will be published by Beacon Press in the spring of 1997.

Sherron Courneen is an ordained elder in the United Methodist Church and minister at St. Paul's United Methodist Church in San Jose, California. She serves on various committees within the Nevada Annual Conference of the UMC. The mother of four children and grandmother of three girls, Sherron loves to garden, walk in the sand by the ocean's edge, hike and "mess with the God stuff."

Elizabeth Fisher is an educator, facilitator and writer who is an active Unitaitian Universalist. Her special areas of interest and activity include explorations into woman-honoring images of the divine in world religions and faith-based social justice work.

Mary Ellen Gaylord is an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ and a 1991 graduate of the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley. She has served at churches in California and Utah and is a member of the Board of Trustees for the Graduate Theological Union. Mary Ellen attended the 1985 U.N. Women's Conference and hopes to go to the next conference accompanied by her three daughters, nine granddaughters and several daughters-in-law!

Sheri Hostetler is a writer and poet living in Oakland. She has been on the CWR Advisory Board since 1994 and currently serves as Interim Co-Director of CWR. She has an M.A. in feminist liberation theology from the Episcopal Divinity School in Massachusetts.

Judith McDaniel is a writer and activist who lives in Tucson, Arizona. Her most recent book is *The Lesbian Couples Guide* (HarperCollins, 1995). She is working on *The Life of Barbara Deming* and has edited a volume of Deming's poetry, *I Change, I Change* (New Victoria, 1996). She traveled to China with both the CWR delegation and the American Friends Service Committee.

Kathryn Poethig, chair of the CWR Advisory Board, is currently a Ph.D. candidate at the Graduate Theological Union with a focus on transitional anthropology, citizenship and human rights in Asia. She has 15 years in refugee-related issues and in Asian solidarity work. She is Associate Director of the Asia Pacific Bridges Project, which links the GTU to Asia Pacific theologies and institutions. Also an "out" lesbian candidate for ordination in the Presbyterian Church (USA), she has most recently co-edited *Called Out: The Voices and Gifts of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgendered Presbyterians*.

Victoria Rue is a feminist theologian, playwright, director and teacher. She recently created The Institute for Religion and the Arts, a network of artists who create plays and workshops that place spirituality and the performing arts in conversation. She is currently Associate Professor of Women's Spirituality at the California Institute of Integral Studies in San Francisco and has been on the faculty of the American Conservatory Theatre since 1989. (Victoria and Kathryn were the "married couple" in the delegation.)

Dona Smith-Powers is an ordained American Baptist minister and founder and director of the Interfaith Institute of Santa Clara County. She also is a part-time minister of justice and peace at the First Baptist Church in Palo Alto, California. Dona lives with her husband in Palo Alto, has two married children and is expecting her first grandchild this fall.

Lisa Vincent-Morrison is a performance lecturer and liturgical artisan. She holds an M.Div. and an M.A. in theology from Princeton Theological Seminary and a B.A. in psychology from Wheaton College.

Melissa Weaver is the director of Agape performance group and develops new operatic and dance stage works. Weaver also works with high school students teaching collaboration and creative problem-solving.

Vail Weller is studying at the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, preparing for Unitarian Universalist ministry. Upon returning from the 1995 NGO Women's Forum, she worked as Student Issues Coordinator for CWR. Weller is currently the interim minister at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of the Ohio Valley in Wheeling, West Virginia. She is a lifetime Unitarian Universalist.

Diana Wynne is the product planner for multimedia software at Macromedia in San Francisco. She traveled to Beijing and Huairou with CWR to explore issues affecting women in technology but ended up hanging out with the women's circus.

Barbara Zoloth is a Vice President and Senior Credit Examiner at Wells Fargo Bank in San Francisco. She is also a former academic economist and has been on the faculty at such institutions as the University of California at Davis and Emory University in Atlanta. As a result of her concerns for lesbians and issues related to homophobia, she has served on the boards of several non-profits, including Bay Area Career Women, Spectrum Center for Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Concerns of Marin County, and the Campaign to End Homophobia.

The Atonement Muddle

An Historical Analysis and Clarification
of a Salvation Theory

JOURNAL OF WOMEN AND RELIGION, VOLUME 15

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The Atonement Muddle:

An historical analysis and clarification
of a salvation theory

by
Inna Jane Ray

*edited by Cheryl Kirk-Duggan, Director
Center for Women and Religion*

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Edited by Cheryl Kirk-Duggan, Director

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Editor's Foreword

This special issue of the Journal of Women and Religion, is the first publication that I have had the privilege of editing. I was named Director of the Center for Women and Religion on February 1, 1997, and I have been blessed with encountering many powerful women and men, with incredible commitment and insight on things religious, health, and community. In our ecumenical setting at the Graduate Theological Union, especially in classes for the M.Div., M.A., and Ph.D., we communicate about many facets of doctrine, belief, theory in the arenas of religion, spirituality, science, art, sacred texts, literature, history, sociology, psychology, amid the sacred and the profane. As the Center enters its twenty-seventh year, it is timely and propitious that we explore a question many centuries old, but just as problematic and new for many today: Atonement.

Why feature an issue that is an especial concern for Christians in a non-denominational and interfaith center? What better forum, for the Center was founded to end sexism and promote justice for women in religious institutions, and to provide feminist curriculum resources, works, and programs for seminaries and the wider community on issues of women's spirituality, experience, and culture. And in a critical, in depth study of Atonement, Inna Jane Ray states that Atonement theory is often at the heart of persecution, oppression, and confusion. She takes us from the early Church leaders through medieval scholars to present day reflection on issues of justice, suffering, and doctrine, helping us hear the many voices which have or have not worked to make clear this most tedious ideology, the Theory of Atonement.

An investigation of the Atonement theory concerns the doctrine of salvation. Salvation by justification, related to the suffering and death of Jesus during the crucifixion, is thought to have secured reconciliation with God for human beings. The event of Christ's

suffering and death allegedly "paid a debt for sin" or "placated the wrath of God for sin." Ray begins her work, primarily an historical overview and analysis, in a quest to answer a query provoked by backlash to the 1993 Re-imagining Conference: "Do you have to believe that Jesus Christ suffered and died to pay for sin to call yourself a Christian?" Inna Jane Ray presents a contemporary Feminist critique of Atonement theory in the United States and concludes that substitutionary Atonement theory is irresolvably problematic for contemporary Feminists and a belief that Jesus Christ suffered and died to pay for sin and placate the wrath of God is not necessary for a claim of Christian identity. Her work does not attack faith in the salvation of God as revealed in Jesus Christ; Ray's intention is to liberate the Gospels from a theological stalemate for contemporary hearers.

Ray's work is a testament to the achievements occurring at the GTU and the Center for Women and Religion, and celebrates our initiative of Academic Excellence, Empowerment, and Leadership, where we focus on rigorous academic scholarship and leadership skills. Using feminist and womanist pedagogies, the Center promotes classes and workshops that focus on critical thinking, assessment and spirituality in both individual and communal based learning. Short courses and seminars focusing on the dynamics of leadership and well being enable students to be prepared to deal with and excel in their vocations of the parish, chaplaincy, and/or academia. The Center continues to support our groundbreaking Curriculum Project, in which student-facilitated classes are designed to integrate women's ways of knowing with feminist theoretical and theological content. Our next steps for the Center include exploring the feasibility of a graduate program in Women and Religion at the GTU.

This study is also important for our Building Bridges initiative, wherein the Center is creating stronger alliances with the GTU member seminaries and Bay Area religious institutions. Plans include creating a forum of representatives from each seminary to work with the Center to build a broader awareness of women's religious issues to each campus. In both communities, our programming will target "Spirituality, Women, and Health," under the rubric of our Women's Community Forum. Inna Ray's study reminds us that although not all

of us are Christian, the issues that arise in the study of Atonement are human issues. We see this volume as a springboard for dynamic dialogues in days to come. The passion exhibited in this work is the kind of passion that infuses our upcoming conferences.

The Center for Women and Religion will sponsor two upcoming conferences: "Soul to Soul: Women, Religion, and the 21st Century," Feb. 26-Mar. 1, 1998, with keynote speakers Dr. Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza and Bishop Leontine Kelly. This symposium will bring international scholars to the GTU to explore issues relating to women and religion, specifically issues of academic and religious institutional environment, theory, pedagogy, praxis, and ecumenism. The Center will cosponsor a second conference, "Women and Religion," with the Tenri Yamato Culture Congress, July 17-20, 1998, in Tenri, Japan, under the auspices of Dr. Akio Inoue, to celebrate and strengthen the GTU's ties with the Pacific Rim, and to heighten our global awareness and presence.

We invite you to walk with Inna Ray in her outstanding work and to consider the impact of Atonement, of suffering, justice, and liberation on your life and the lives of our global community as we move toward the 21st century.

Dr. Cheryl A. Kirk-Duggan, Director
Center for Women and Religion
Graduate Theological Union
Berkeley, 1997

Acknowledgments

The core of this study was written during the winter of 1996 as a thesis in the Graduate Theological Union's masters degree program, where I was affiliated with the Franciscan School of Theology. William Cieslak, O.F.M., Cap., chaired my committee, and Joseph M. Powers, S.J., and Rebecca Parker were my readers. Franciscan ethos informs my theological position and Bill guided my writing with alacrity and intelligence. I credit Joe with teaching me, through discussion of the Eucharist, the many dimensions of reality in concepts of salvation, and Rebecca Parker for her illumination of the effects of Atonement theory on women's relationships at the intimate level. I thank Rebecca Lyman for her suggestions early on, and Xavier Harris, O.F.M., for his encouragement all along.

In a different kind of way I would like to acknowledge the personal support of my friends, fellow students and housemates where I lived as I was writing my thesis: Denis, Joan, Barbara C., Jennifer and Chris, Tessa, Don, Kathleen, and Matt.

Cheryl Kirk-Duggan has brought my diction to greater order than it has ever had before and working with her has been a pleasure. I hope her unprecedented decision to set this entire study before the CWR membership will help to bring clarity to a complex issue of importance to women in ministry.

Introduction

The purpose of this study will be to answer the question: "Do you have to believe that Jesus Christ suffered and died to pay for sin to call yourself a Christian?" This question came before me while reading about the backlash to the Re-imagining Conference of November 4-7, 1993. Primarily from Evangelical and conservative Presbyterian sources, the backlash focused on three areas of Feminist expression at the conference as being heretical and/or anti-Christian: sensually feminine images for God, the use of the term "Sophia" as a name and characterization of God, and repudiation of "the Atonement." This article by David Heim in *Christian Century* succinctly described the backlash to the conference:

News about Re-Imagining was first spread early this year [1994] when *Good News* and the *Presbyterian Layman* launched extensive attacks on the conference. These journals, which represent conservative groups within the United Methodist Church and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), are veterans of oppositional politics in their denominations. They hoped that their negative coverage would mobilize a conservative show of strength, and they attached to the magazines handy cards to send to church leaders protesting the use of church funds and the participation of church officials in a conference which, in their view, included "pagan worship rituals," worship of "the female goddess Sophia," a celebration of lesbianism and a rejection of the atonement of Jesus Christ.

Clearly, these reports were not designed to advance discussion. The issue was heresy, and heretics, after all, are to be weeded out, not engaged in dialogue. But this approach meant that in reporting on the invocations to Sophia, for example, the journals did not bother to note how Sophia, or Wisdom, is personified in the book of Proverbs as a "master architect" with God in creation . . . Nor did they stop to explain that women theologians have for some time been pointing out how a fairly exclusive emphasis on Jesus' self-sacrifice and death as a salvific act, in which we should participate by

way of imitation, has been problematic for women. It can be appropriated to enforce roles of unhealthy self-abnegation and to shackle women in abusive relationships. . . .

Consider the cross: Millions of Christians around the world have crucifixes or crosses on their walls. In countless sickrooms and emergency rooms Christians take strength from the belief that in Jesus the God of the universe endured and surmounted suffering and death. It is reasonable for them to wonder what Delores Williams is talking about — and to wonder if she is indeed worshipping the same God.¹

In response to the World Council of Churches' Ecumenical Decade — Churches in Solidarity with Women (1988-1998)—representatives of 32 denominations from 27 countries, 2,200 women and 83 men, met in a theological council on "re-imagining" the symbols and metaphors for Christian doctrine and ministry. Much of this re-imagining work was accomplished through the liturgical use of feminine imagery and language for God. A few women made statements about the atonement. These events were characterized as heretical in some Christian circles.

The negative statements on atonement and its imagery, and the backlash they "provoked," revealed a sharp argument within Christianity about the meaning of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, particularly the way interpretations of his death by torture as salvific play out in the lives of women. Delores Williams, professor at Union Theological seminary, argued that the saving work of Jesus Christ was manifest in his life and ministry, not his death, and:

I don't think we need a doctrine of atonement at all. I don't think we need folks hanging on crosses and blood dripping and weird stuff. . . . We just need to listen to God within.²

Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, theologian and author, reportedly said:

I can no longer worship in a theological context that depicts God as an abusive parent and Jesus as the obedient, trusting child. This violent theology encourages the violence of our streets and nation.³

When these scholars' repudiation of "the Atonement" was attacked as unorthodox and unChristian, the implication was that belief in "the Atonement" is necessary to claim Christian identity. I realized I had no clear idea of what "the Atonement" was and whether or not I considered it to be a necessary component of Christian faith, nor had I been aware that many Feminist theologians

reject the matter with strong feelings. I decided to study the issue and try to answer the question for myself.

Christian Salvation and Atonement Theory

Christianity is a religion of salvation. The first condition for a belief in salvation is that people agree that the world is not as it should be or could be, and needs to be changed, or saved. The most common Christian view is that things are not as they should be because human beings are estranged from God. They desire to be united with God and God desires to be united with them, but this mutual desire is frustrated by encounter with an obstacle of some kind. Salvation is removal of this obstacle and union with God. The Hebrew Bible stories of the creation and fall in Genesis 1-3 condition many, but by no means all, Christian theories of obstacle and union. Within its Christian hermeneutical platform, the obstacle between humans and God is "original sin," an enduring condition of willful estrangement from God instigated by the first human beings.

Justification is one explanation of how the work of Jesus Christ overcame the obstacle of original sin. Justification is the idea that sinners cannot be re-united with God until the sin that separates them is removed through some combination and sequence of these elements: repentance of the sinner, expiation⁴ of the sin, forgiveness by God, restoration of the sinner to righteousness, or justification, and finally, reunion with God. The work of Christ effects expiation, or justification, or reconciliation, or reunion.

Atonement theory is one version of justification. The word "Atonement" does not exist in the Bible and was a portmanteau word (literally "at-one-ment") introduced into the English language in the 16th century to be used as a term to translate various Hebrew and Greek words for what Jesus accomplished. Since it is often used as a general term for the "work of Christ," and notions of precisely what that work was have varied widely, in this study I use the term "Atonement theory" to refer to the specific justification theory of salvation in which the suffering and death of Jesus during the crucifixion is thought to have secured reconciliation with God for human beings because it "paid a debt for sin," or "placated the wrath of God for sin." The theory is often called "substitutionary Atonement" because proponents view Jesus as having substituted

himself in the place of humankind so that, through his divine ontological status he could do something for them that as mere mortals they could not do for themselves.

If original sin is not assumed, then salvation from it is not necessary and the work of Christ must be explained some other way. The term "original sin" does not occur in the Bible and was a theory gradually developed by Christian philosophers in the Western Latin tradition. It was not given a complete definition until the relatively late date of about 400 CE, by Augustine of Hippo. Does the definition of Christian salvation depend exclusively on a concept of original sin?

Is Atonement Theory "Orthodox"?

To answer the question of whether orthodox Christian faith must include a belief in the Atonement theory of salvation by justification, and therefore whether repudiation of it is heretical, I realized that I must propose a method of defining and determining its orthodoxy. If Atonement theory is "orthodox," does that mean it has been believed without reservation everywhere and at all times by everyone? A cursory investigation of the matter found a general consensus that neither the Atonement theory nor any other systematic description of what is meant by the Christian claim of salvation has ever been precisely defined by the whole church.

Although redemption is central to christian faith, its conception and understanding has never been an immediate and direct object of ecclesial or conciliar definition. Indirectly, conciliar statements [on] the christology, justification, or the eucharist imply specific understandings of redemption, but do not explicitly define it. . . . Around the concept of redemption circle a cluster of religious notions that converge upon the meaning of making good, new, or free, delivering from death, mortality, and sin, and renewing of self and society.⁵

Until the Reformation, Christological orthodoxy was generally considered to be rooted in conformity to the consensus of the bishops who ratified the Creed of Chalcedon in 451 at the Fourth Ecumenical Council. The patristic Councils were convened to establish unity in the empire through doctrinal consensus. This consensus was "catholic," which meant it included and unified the

regional churches represented by their bishops at the Councils. Conciliar statements were meant to be official and normative for all the churches, or "orthodox." There is no statement on Atonement theory in the Creeds of Nicea and Chalcedon. In the ecumenical Councils of Nicea and Chalcedon the bishops of the church did not struggle with this issue as they did with the nature of Christ and the formulation of the Trinity. The church never defined Atonement theory as a catholic orthodox doctrine in the patristic age.

After the schism with the Eastern Orthodox church in 1054, the Western Roman Catholic ecclesial body was fairly stable until the advent of the Reformation, when the progressive splintering of Western unity into confessional denominations denied catholicity to any statement pronounced by any particular tradition about its "orthodoxy." The World Council of Churches (WCC) is the most inclusive gathered body of the Christian churches to attempt to establish a unified Christianity since the close of the patristic age*.

The WCC's primary statements are the "Basis," to which all members agree:

The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Savior according to the scriptures and therefore seek to fulfill together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.⁶

and the "New Delhi Statement" on baptism, eucharist and ministry, which was the outcome of ecumenical study on the unity and nature of the church:

We believe that the unity which is both God's will and his gift to his Church is being made visible as all in each place who are baptized into Jesus Christ and confess him as Lord and Savior are brought by the Holy Spirit into ONE fully committed fellowship, holding the one apostolic faith, preaching the one Gospel, breaking the one bread, joining in common prayer, and having a corporate life reaching out in witness and service to all and who at the same time are united with the whole Christian fellowship in all places and all ages in such wise that ministry and members are accepted by all, and that all can act and speak together as occasion requires for the tasks to which God calls his people.⁷

There is no mention of Atonement theory in either of these documents, nor any hermeneutical standard on how to interpret the scriptures that confess Jesus Christ as Savior. The phrases that

surround the description of "Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior" mention baptism, fellowship, Eucharist, preaching, prayer, witness, service and unity with all other Christians across the boundaries of time and space as they are called by God. The New Delhi Statement defines a unified platform of ministry rather than a speculative doctrine as primarily constitutive of Christianity. These two conciliar statements cannot directly answer my question about the orthodox status of Atonement theory.

An Historical Investigation of Atonement Theory

Since Atonement theory has never been the focus of a catholic council of the whole church attempting to determine its truth status, some other method for determining its orthodoxy must be used. An historical investigation seems an appropriate way to determine from its tradition what is missing in its dogmatic definition. My task is to review the history of Atonement theory, find out why many contemporary Christian Feminists reject it, and determine whether rejection of it necessarily constitutes alienation from orthodox Christianity.

This overview of Atonement theory — organized into three historical periods, Patristic, Medieval and Modern/Postmodern — provides a framework within which I will focus on the theory against pertinent aspects of that period's culture. Precedent for this method of division of soteriological history is found in the system of classification used by Roman Catholic scholar John P. Galvin in his chapter on "Christology" in *Systematic Theology: Roman Catholic Perspectives*, Vol. I:

In classifying soteriologies, it is useful to ask what aspect or aspects of Christ's existence are seen as salvific. The four major points of reference are Christ's incarnation, public life, crucifixion and resurrection, either alone or in some combination. Is salvation attributed to God's presence in Jesus? To Jesus' teaching and example? To his death on the cross? To his exaltation after death? Or must these items be drawn together more closely than this series of questions suggests? Various positions have been held in the history of Christian thought.⁸

Galvin arranges his four classifications to correspond to four historical periods during which one salvific aspect dominates as the integrative factor of the four classifications.

Over the course of the history of Christian thought, each of the four reference points has at times been accorded pride of place: the incarnation in much of patristic thought; the incarnation and the crucifixion in medieval reflection; Jesus' public life in modern liberal theology; the resurrection in many Christologies of recent vintage.⁹

I will use the 'place of Jesus' public life' in my discussion of salvation theory in the modern to post-modern period, but I will not continue, as Galvin does, into recent contemporary discourse on the resurrection.

Since it is the causal association of suffering with salvation that has provoked the strongest condemnation from the Christian Feminist theological community, I have explored the relationship of suffering to theories of salvation in each period.

After an overview of the history of Atonement theory in the first three chapters, the fourth chapter presents the contemporary Feminist controversion of Atonement theory both in light of women's life experience and in systematic Feminist theology. I explore dissenting and alternative strands of Feminist thought on the crucifixion, and finish with a meditation on the vicissitudes of appropriation of the passion of Christ. In my conclusion I answer my question.

This study will not be a comparison of the relative "Biblicality" of the many salvation metaphors and theories I will discuss, nor will I attempt to answer the challenge in the statement: "A Christian must believe the Atonement because it's in the Bible." However, I will cite chapter and verse for the most common Bible "proof texts" for each of the foundational metaphors discussed in chapter one.

Chapter 1

The Patristic Age: Salvation by Incarnation

No Systematic Theory of Salvation, but Metaphors Abundant

The patristic era (70-600 CE), extends from the time of the passing of eyewitnesses of the life of Jesus to the pontificate of Gregory I. During this period, most historians and scholars agree that there is no single source for, nor stable systematic formulation of salvation by the church.

The development of the Church's ideas about the saving effects of the incarnation was a slow, long drawn-out process. Indeed, while the conviction of redemption through Christ has always been the motive force of Christian faith, no final and universally accepted definition of the manner of its achievement has been formulated to this day. . . while enumerating all sorts of benefits bestowed by Christ, the Apostolic Fathers nowhere co-ordinate their main ideas or attempt to sketch a rationale of salvation.¹

Atonement theory is not the focus of the period, but elements from the many metaphors for salvation used during this era eventually became incorporated into a monolithic soteriological theory of salvation by justification through "the Atonement." Therefore, it is worth taking a close look at these root elements, their contexts of origin, and some of this century's scholarly opinion about them.

In their homiletic and apologetic works, Christian writers used metaphors of education, fulfillment, exaltation, healing, restoration, sacrifice, redemption, ransom, propitiation, expiation, divinization, victory over the devil and deliverance from domination by demons, fate and necessity. The syncretic cultures under imperial Roman jurisdiction in which these metaphors were developed shared a common understanding of them. They were used abundantly by all

the writers of the patristic age (including the writers and redactors who were shaping what became the Christian canon) who often combined them without regard for their contradictions and without defining their terms. There were three primary sources for salvific idioms: Hellenistic Greek philosophy or Middle Platonism, Hebrew scripture and Judaic wisdom philosophy, and popular religion.

The Hellenist philosopher, through cultivation of reason and purging of carnal passions, sought to achieve a state of intellectual or rational purity that would enable him to unite with the transcendent Logos of the Stoics, or World-soul of the Platonists. The idea of the Logos was used to explain the nature of Christ's mediation of divine reality through the incarnation.

The philosopher's way to self-fulfillment involved not only long education and study, but also a moral discipline (*askesis*) designed to cleanse the soul of the passions which prevented it from being its true self. Yet the philosophical quest as it was understood in the era of the early empire had more than a little in common with the mood of popular religion, especially as the latter was expressed in the vogue of the mystery cults. . . . Both, finally, saw the human person as capable of a transcendent destiny in the fellowship of the Divine.²

Judaic wisdom philosophy had a more practical character and was oriented to relational understanding of God and persons as they become united in history. Human wisdom, or insight or illumination, came about in a state of openness to divine wisdom. This tradition of the Wisdom of God who is active in creation influenced Christian understanding of the Holy Spirit.

Wisdom traditionally meant the practical insight necessary for the successful conduct of the affairs of life, and the wise were people who saw into the structures and meanings of things. . . . Wisdom (not unlike the Stoic logos or the Platonist World-Soul) orders creation, but she also seeks out and summons people to understanding and makes them friends with God.³

The practice of sacrifice as sin offering, blessing and thanksgiving, and the figures of the prophet-martyr and the suffering servant were adapted from Hebrew culture and scripture and were incorporated into metaphors of the meaning of the suffering and death of Jesus.

Popular religion was syncretic and polytheistic. The diverse Mediterranean cultures of the Roman Empire held in common a belief in the existence of many gods, spirits, demons, astrological

forces, fate, necessity and the devil. The world was felt to be dense with unseen capricious powers, most of them hostile to human beings. Polytheism was a cultural given and monotheism was an innovation. Life after death was a debated issue and resurrection of the body after death was a radical claim. Most people participated in public rites of Roman civil religion for the welfare of the state, home-based devotions to local deities, and private membership in cults of personal renewal and spiritual experience. Some of these "mystery cults" used rituals of dying and rising with a fertility God to secure rejuvenation and immortality for believers.

Christian apologists and evangelists denounced pagan and Jewish cosmological beliefs, yet used their language in constructing metaphors and analogies to explain the claims of the new religion of Christianity. Since combinations of philosophical, scriptural and popular metaphors were more conglomerate than systematic, I will isolate and describe the most common or dominant metaphors by type rather than by authorship or chronological appearance. On the basis of their implicit underlying anthropological assumptions, I will collect and bundle them into three categories: a.) Metaphors of Victor, b.) Metaphors of Divinization; and c.) Metaphors of Sacrifice.

Metaphors of Victory

The metaphors of victory over evil forces and those of ransom, redemption and deliverance from enslavement or captivity, are related to each other in that they share common anthropological and cosmological assumptions: that human beings are situated between God and forces hostile to God under whose domination they have fallen, and who in turn are overcome by the work of Christ.

Victory Over Evil Forces. Against the dense invisible horizon of powerful spirits, demons, and demi-gods by which human beings are enslaved, Jesus Christ emerges as the strongest cosmic power. Through his victory over demons, the balance of power in the universe undergoes a decisive shift, and freedom from demonic enslavement for humans is secured. (I Cor. 6:3, 15:3; I. Pet. 3:22; II Pet. 2:10-11; Matt. 8:16; Lk. 11:14, Eph. 6:12)

Writing in the early second century, the apologist Justin Martyr "Christianizes" a description of the origin of demons in the world. He

means to reconcile the existence of demons and evil with the Christian assertion of a good world created by a good Creator.

God [after the Creation] . . . committed the care of men and of all things under heaven to angels whom He appointed over them. But the angels transgressed this appointment, and were captivated by love of women, and begat children who are those that are called demons; and besides, they afterwards subdued the human race to themselves, partly by magical writings, and partly by fears and punishments they occasioned, and partly by teaching them to offer sacrifices, and incense, and libations, of which things they stood in need after they were enslaved by lustful passions; and among men they sowed murders, wars, adulteries, intemperate deeds, and all wickedness.⁴

Christ is the "Word" of God, the ordering power in creation begotten by God before the advent of the world, who was born as a human to reconstitute the order of the world after it had been disordered by corrupt caretakers. Justin argues that humans are not ruled by fate and necessity. They have free will and are accountable for their choices, but they have been misled by clever and malicious demons. Christ, as the Logos, Reason himself, will lead humans out of their mistakes into truth by means of persuasion, illumination and example.

Since Jesus was tortured to death, Christ's victory over evil forces is rarely described as a decisive battle or straightforward confrontation. The mechanism of his victory was depicted as more strategic than forceful, and often several kinds of mechanisms were presented together in a single thesis.

In his book *Christus Victor*, modern historian Gustaf Aulén calls victory over evil powers the "classic" theory of Atonement and asserts that it was the dominant metaphor of the patristic period. The fundamental theological problem embedded in the victory theory is that it implies a dualistic universe in which an evil power exists that is capable of putting up a resistance to God's plan. If this uncreated evil power exists alongside God, then there are two Gods. If this evil power is created by God, the goodness of God is compromised.⁵ Aulén acknowledges this difficulty and replies to it in this way:

But in truth the classic idea of the Atonement, as it is set forth in the Fathers, is both clear and monumental. . . . God in Christ overcomes the hostile powers which hold man in bondage. At the same time

these hostile powers are also the executants of God's will. The patristic theology is dualistic, but it is not an absolute Dualism. The deliverance of man from the power of death and the devil is at the same time his deliverance from God's judgement. . . . Thus the power of evil is broken; that is to say, not that sin and death no longer exist, but that, the devil having been once for all conquered by Christ, His triumph is in principle universal, and His redemptive work can go forward everywhere, through the Spirit who unites men with God and 'deifies' them . . .⁶

Whether or not his formulation resolves the conflict, it is clear that the metaphor of Christ the Victor became popular in the context of a pervasive assumption of the existence of a myriad of cosmic forces hostile to human beings.

Ransom. The term ransom came from the common practice of the ancient world of taking captives for ransom, or what is called kidnapping today. This idea was expressed through transaction or tricking stories, the most famous built around the image of a fish hook baited with Jesus that God used to snare the devil. (Matt. 20:28; Mark 10:45)

The devil is "due" the souls of humans because they are sinful, but God determines to save humankind anyway. Instead of force, God uses a trick to cheat the devil of his "due." God dangles a sinless man, Jesus, as bait before the devil, who snatches him up and drags him down to hell only to discover that he has unjustly forced an innocent man. As a result of this greedy and stupid mistake, the devil is forced to give up the souls of all humankind in return.

Irenaeus is considered by historian L.W. Grensted to have initiated this transaction theory, but historian Hastings Rashdall says it originates with Origen.⁷ Tertullian gave its most forensic version. Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory the Great used the version where Christ was used to bait a fishhook set for the devil. Augustine used it in the image of a mouse-trap baited with Christ's blood.⁸

Again, the theological problem here is the implicit existence of both an independent power of evil and an independent law of transaction to which both God and the devil are subject. Apparently the Apostolic Fathers were not disturbed by the theological difficulties inherent in this metaphor, which in my opinion shows that they did not use these images in any literal or systematic sense. As preachers and apologists, trained in public persuasion, they

probably used stories of tricking the devil to convey a fearless mockery of demonic power and to belittle evil and despair in a spirit of "Easter laughter," that hilarious exuberance and conviction of triumph following the Resurrection.

The theory of a transaction with the devil remained the customary and orthodox statement of the doctrine of the Atonement for nearly a thousand years, yet it would not be far from the truth to say that it never represents the real thought of those who use it. It was a convenient explanation, suitable to the conceptions of the day, and well adapted to homiletic purposes. But it was little more. . . . And thus the interest of the period lies very largely outside the transactional theories proper, in those floating ideas which were never clearly worked out, but in which was contained the germ of almost every type of later speculation.⁹

Redemption. Slavery was a universal legal practice in the ancient world. There were hereditary slaves, non-citizens captured in war, *cuvée* laborers and slaves made by self-commitment to bondage to pay debts. A slave could be redeemed from bondage by a price being paid to the owner, or by "buying oneself" from the owner. Everyone understood what redemption from slavery could mean for a slave. (Isa. 51:11)

But as a theory of divine interaction, again the problem is: to whom is the redemption price of enslaved humanity to be paid? Who has judiciary power to regulate transactions between the rival claims of God and the devil? One answer is that God is the supreme power of the universe and is therefore the one demanding that some sort of salvific transaction occur. But why is this masked as a transaction with a proxy such as the devil?

As a metaphor for salvation, the image of redemption from slavery works to express the joy of freedom and gratitude felt upon such release; but if the metaphor is taken literally and legally, then it becomes a difficult theological conundrum.

Deliverance. Based in the book of Exodus in the Hebrew Scriptures, deliverance was derived from the story of the Hebrews who were delivered from slavery in Egypt by the direct intervention of God. During the patristic age people understood the hostile forces from which they were delivered as *demonic*, and therefore the Biblical account of historical deliverance from *human* political tyranny was

used allegorically; it was never used as a critique of the contemporary situation as it has been by 20th century Liberation theologians. Under Roman jurisdiction, deliverance from political tyranny would have been considered a seditious statement and the apologists and evangelists were already trying to defend Christianity from charges of sabotaging imperial fortunes by the refusal of Christians to participate in Roman civil religion. (Ex. 21:7-11; Lev. 19:20; Job 6:23)

Metaphors of Divinization

The metaphors of divinization, education, recapitulation and exaltation/glorification all share a common anthropological assumption that human beings progress in a plan of development ordained by God at the time of creation wherein they proceed through anticipated difficulties to an eventual fulfillment of which Christ is the proof and the means.

Divinization through Education and Truth. Hellenistic culture favored Plato's idea that ignorance is the source of human error, and that education would deliver humans from error and sin. Divine goodness was identified with right reason. In the dialogues of Plato's Republic, the philosopher Socrates argued that the use of right knowledge by right reason would produce right action. Philosophically-minded Christian writers such as Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria described humankind as immature and inexperienced. In their interpretations of the creation story in Genesis, Adam and Eve did not do the wrong thing fully knowing that it was wrong, rather, they succumbed to the guile of the devil; they became confused and made mistakes. Christ came to illuminate human beings in right knowledge and the ways of right reason, and set an example to follow. The truth of Christ subsumes and surpasses human error. (Psa. 82:6, 116:11; II Pet. 1:4)

Irenaeus (c. 130 - c. 202) interprets the story of the Fall as a regrettable but not catastrophic or unforeseen breach with God, whose plan for the unfolding of creation always included the Incarnation. Irenaeus characterized humankind as primitive, untutored and unknowing, and the advent of Jesus Christ is a part of an educational and developmental process intended from the beginning to lead humans from mortality to immortality, corruption

to perfection, and from worldly beauty to eternal glory, all of which demonstrates the goodness of God.

God's power, wisdom and goodness are all demonstrated at once: power and goodness in his freely creating and establishing things which do not yet exist; wisdom in his making things which follow in order, which go together, which are well arranged. Through his immense goodness, some of them develop, continue for a long time, and reach the glory of the uncreated. God generously bestows on them what is good. . . .

. . . Submission to God is incorruption, and continuance in incorruption is the glory of the uncreated. Through this system . . . humanity was created according to the image and established in the likeness of the uncreated God. The Father decided and commanded; the Son molded and shaped; the Spirit nourished and developed. Humanity slowly progresses, approaches perfection, and draws near to the uncreated God. . . . It was therefore appropriate for humanity first to be made, being made to grow, having grown to be strengthened, being stronger to multiply, having multiplied to recover from illness, having recovered to be glorified, and once glorified to see its Lord. God is the one who is going to be seen; the vision of God produces incorruptibility; incorruptibility makes a person approach God.¹⁰

Sin is an illness that comes with the territory of creation from which humankind, in the fullness of God's plan, will recover. Healing is a metaphor often combined with education as part of the process of salvation, the "medicine of immortality."

Clement of Alexandria (d.c. 220) followed Irenaeus in his use of the metaphor of saving knowledge. Knowledge will bring humankind to maturity and love, and love will lead to fellowship and union with divinity. Faith, a "saving change," comes first, then the believer proceeds through education into love. The actual "mechanism" of salvation is divinization, brought about by entering into loving communion in friendship with God.

Faith then is a compendious knowledge of the essentials, but knowledge is a sure and firm demonstration of the things received through faith, being itself built up by the Lord's teaching on the foundation of the faith . . . there seems to me to be a first kind of saving change from heathenism to faith, a second from faith to knowledge; and this latter, as it passes on into love, begins at once to establish a mutual friendship between that which knows and that which is known.¹¹

Rashdall states that Jesus as cosmic mentor was the dominant metaphor for the nature of his salvific work in the patristic period, at least for a literate elite. He argues that unless Christ were the bearer of the truth about God, his death would have had no significance at all, and therefore any redemptive value in his death is dependent on the work of Jesus as educator.

For many of the earlier fathers, it is not too much to say, it was primarily by His teaching that Christ became the Saviour of the world. It was upon the appeal which this teaching made to the reason, the heart, the conscience of mankind that they based their conviction that in Him the Logos was supremely revealed: it was precisely in and through His teaching that His "Divinity" was manifested.¹²

Divinization by Recapitulation. Through the idea of the "Second Adam," Irenaeus also proposed a specific theory of divinization called the recapitulation. In recapitulation theory, Jesus is always the companion of humanity and his Incarnation was preordained as a summary and completion of a creation/salvation plan. (Eph. 1:10)

It is now plain from the evidence that the Logos who "existed in the beginning with God," "through whom everything was made," and who has always been humanity's companion is the one who, in the last days, at the moment preordained by the Father, was united to the creature he had shaped, and became a human being subject to hurt. . . . when he was enfleshed and became a human being, he summed up in himself the long history of the human race and so furnished us with salvation in a short and summary way, to the end that what we had lost in Adam (namely, to be after the image and the likeness of God) we might recover in Christ Jesus.

Existing as God's Logos, he descended from the Father and became enfleshed and humbled himself to the point of death and completed God's program for our salvation.¹³

True, divinization entails cleansing or healing from sin, but it is a superlative fulfillment beyond mere restoration to primordial innocence. God planned divinization for human beings from the beginning of creation and brought it to culmination in the Incarnation. Contemporary Roman Catholic theologian John Galvin thinks recapitulation theory is the most systematically coherent soteriological formulation for this era:

A more specific theory, perhaps the most important theme of the period, is the idea of recapitulation. This conception derives from Irenaeus of Lyons, though it has biblical foundation in Paul's epistles. [Rom. 5; 1 Cor. 15; Gal. 4:4; Ephesians 1:10] . . . In patristic thought, the incarnation is the beginning and foundation of such recapitulation, but there is also a resurrectional component; it is as "firstborn of the dead" (Col. 1:18) that Christ restores to the human race the existence in the image and likeness of God that had been lost in Adam.

. . . Closely connected with the principle that what is not assumed in Christ is not saved, it focuses attention on the incarnation. More ontological than juridical in its terminology, it conceives of salvation primarily as communication of and participation in divine life (2 Peter 1:3-4), not primarily as forgiveness of sin. Salvation is the perfection of creation.¹⁴

Contemporary Lutheran historian Jaroslav Pelikan also writes that the pervasive sense of the patristic age is that salvation offers to human beings something more than restoration to the primordial innocence of Adam and Eve in the garden.

Identification with Christ would lift the believer through the human nature of Christ to union with his divine nature and thus with God and thus to deification. The full clarification of the term "deification" had to await the resolution of the conflict over the deity of Christ; the church could not specify what it meant to promise that man would become divine until it had specified what it meant to confess that Christ had always been divine. But even from the writings of Irenaeus, Clement and Origen, for all the differences between them, we can conclude that the church could not regard "salvation" as simply a restoration of what had been lost in the first Adam, the original creation; it had to be an incorporation into what had been vouchsafed in the second Adam, a new creation.¹⁵

Humans are to be restored to sinlessness and will also be given knowledge and eternal life. In salvation, then, human beings will be given, by being united with Christ through the Incarnation, what they were at first forbidden and then attempted to take for themselves: fruit from the trees of knowledge and eternal life.

Divinization through Exaltation, or Glorification. Exaltation, the most mystical version of salvation, occurs when the saved person is literally "taken up into God." This divinization is a free gift of God, not something that can be earned or accomplished by human beings for themselves. (John 1:1-17, 2)

Thus it seems possible to speak of a doctrine of divinization in the Eastern Fathers. Beyond vocabulary there are common conceptions of anthropology and a Greek tradition, visible from Irenaeus on, which is very different from that which prevailed in the later West, where a theology of grace was elaborated in place of a theology of divinization. The Eastern Fathers have in common a stress on the supernatural vocation of human nature. They consider that this vocation, from which human beings were detoured by sin, had found its radical accomplishment in the incarnation of Christ, who by the sacraments imparts to persons the privileges of his divine humanity.¹⁶

The work of Christ brings human beings into the fulfillment of God's intended "supernatural vocation." In Christ, human and divine natures were combined in one person, an act of salvation effected once and forever by a sharing of divine essence at the Incarnation, and since then imparted to human beings through the sacraments. The believer is taken up, from the impermanent world of flux, death and decay, into a truly new ontological state of permanent and ultimate reality. Sin is merely a "detour" that occurs on the way to the destination ordained by God.

He was mixed with our nature, in order that by intermixture with the divine it might become divine, being delivered from death and freed from the tyranny of the enemy. For his return from death becomes to the mortal race the beginning of the return to immortal life.¹⁷

The Cappadocian fathers, who successfully converted Arian Constantinople to belief in the Trinity, taught that "our nature," which is our commonly held mortal human nature, is changed by "mixing" with that of God's immortal nature in Jesus Christ. Salvation operates through the mixing together of divine being and human being, entirely to the advantage of the human. Exaltation is the primary metaphor for salvation in the Greek Orthodox churches to this day.

Athanasius (296-373 CE) wrote that the Incarnation restored real existence, or immortality, to human beings, who had lost their original real existence, or "likeness to God." Likeness to God is maintained by the act of paying deep and uninterrupted attention to the mirror-image of God placed in the depth of the soul. By turning its attention to non-spiritual things which are made of nothingness and doomed to death, humankind lost this reflection of God in its

soul. The Word of God, united to the corporate entity of human nature in Jesus Christ, restores this mirror-image in the soul, and this restoration of real existence is what overcomes death.

The presence and love of the Word had called them into being; inevitably, therefore, when they lost the knowledge of God, they lost existence with it; for it is God alone Who exists, evil is non-being, the negation and antithesis of good. By nature, of course, man is mortal, since he was made from nothing; but he bears also the Likeness of Him Who is, and if he preserves that Likeness through constant contemplation, then his nature is deprived of its power and he remains incorrupt.¹⁸

. . . through this union of the immortal Son of God with our human nature, all men were clothed with incorruption in the promise of the resurrection. For the solidarity of mankind is such that, by virtue of the Word's indwelling in a single human body, the corruption which goes with death has lost its power over all.¹⁹

Divinization is immortality, which is genuine existence instead of the temporal, ghostly pretense of existence in the world of matter. The material world has no real existence of its own. Matter is something that is called into existence out of nothingness, and will return to nothingness. To choose the non-being of the material world instead of the genuine being of the spiritual reality and goodness of God, is to choose evil, or the negation and antithesis of good. The human race would have perished if the indwelling of Jesus Christ, the Word of God, had not changed its material existence into immortal being and pre-empted its death in Resurrection.

Sacrifice, Expiation of Sins, Vicarious Suffering and Death, Martyrdom, and a note on Ascetic Practice

A third kind of anthropological and cosmological assumption undergirds the related metaphors of sacrifice, expiation of sins, and vicarious suffering and death, in which human beings themselves have effected a sharp and catastrophic break with the original plan of God that requires of God something out of the ordinary to set it right. God's disposition has been adversely affected by human behavior and must be changed if divine wrath against humans for sin is to be mitigated and humans are to escape destruction.

Sacrifice and Expiation of Sins. Sacrifice was a universal religious practice throughout the patristic world. Sacrifices were made to affect the sponsorship of divine powers for human projects, to ward off negative spirits, to expiate sins, to secure protection, to propitiate divine wrath, and to invite, establish and sustain patronage. (I Cor. 5:7; II Cor. 5:14-15, 21; Heb. 9:7, 11-12; Rom. 8:3)

Frances M. Young states that since sacrifice was the most pervasive religious practice of the ancient world, it became the dominant Christian salvific metaphor of the patristic age. Departing from the practice of most Mediterranean cultures of this time, including Second Temple Judaism at Jerusalem (until 70 C.E.), Christians did not sacrifice animals to God, but they understood their religious practices in sacrificial terms. Sacrificial language became embedded in Christian discourse:

For sacrifice was the only way of worship known, and so, even though they no longer practised it literally, the Christians spoke of their worship as the offering of spiritual sacrifices. The result is that sacrificial language is embedded in the liturgies used by all the major Christian denominations, and, even in churches with less formal liturgical patterns, sacrifice is never far from the lips of the preacher or evangelist.²⁰

Young asserts that it was generally assumed that Christ died a sacrificial death for the forgiveness of sin, and that in particular it was his blood that washed away sin. She says the expiatory blood of Christ was a powerful symbol in patristic times and still is today, that it has no rational basis and does not require one, since it is instinctual.

The basic assumption that the blood of Christ can purify the heart has passed into Christian literature, hymns, and phraseology. It is still used to evoke a response in the believer, and still often does so without explanation. There is an instinct which accepts this idea in spite of its apparent irrationality when examined or questioned. For the early Christians, the Old Testament was sufficient evidence to prove the efficaciousness of blood as a God-given means of expiation.²¹

In contrast, theologian Van A. Harvey states that the primary purpose of Jewish sacrifice was to strengthen the identity of the worshipper. Those sacrificial practices of the Hebrews that were metaphorically incorporated into Christianity confirmed the faith of

the worshipper, and were meant to bring the worshipper into the available forgiveness of God, and not to effect forgiveness through expiation or propitiation.

The symbols [of sacrifice] used by the earliest Christian community were naturally rooted in Hebraic religious practice, especially sacrifice. The sacrificial ritual was believed to be ordained by God so that the believer might participate in and realize the forgiveness of Yahweh. The sinner seeking reconciliation laid his hand upon the head of the sacrificial animal, signifying his own identification with it. In the shedding of the blood, the sinner symbolized the giving up of his own life. The blood was taken into the Holy of Holies, the offering burned and the meat eaten, once again signifying identification with the sacrificial victim. . . . In so far as this sacrificial system was presupposed, it is doubtful if the idea that the victim was paying a penalty on behalf of the sinner was at all important. Nor was the idea that an angry God must be appeased significant.²²

Perhaps inevitably, through the psychic mechanisms of projection and objectification, a causal link creeps into the praxis of all rituals. Communion sacrifices takes on causal freight; they come to be understood as acts that cause something to change in God, rather than bringing the person who is making the sacrifice into a new identity and changed relation to God.

Worshippers could assume to effect changes both in themselves and in God through a sacrificial act; change on one side of the relationship does not rule out change on the other. The translucent metaphor of sacrifice changes its modal "color" (communion, propitiation or expiation) according to the underlying assumptions its practitioners have made about salvation.

The Greek patristic theologians tended to repudiate the efficacy of sacrifice on the basis that God needs nothing from human beings, and that sacrificial death can accomplish nothing since it is merely a sign of the mortality of matter and nature, which has been overcome by the resurrection.

Vicarious Suffering and Death. The prototypes for the salvific effect of the suffering of a blameless person or the execution of innocent persons can be found in the Hebrew Bible: the "suffering servant" of Isaiah 53, and the execution of the innocent boys in Maccabees 17,18. Christians cite this passage (below) as a prophecy

of the work of Jesus Christ, and use its paradoxical statement on salvation as a basis for the Christian argument: "Jesus Christ suffered and died to pay for your sins." (Mark 14:24)

(53:3) He was despised and rejected by others;
a man of suffering and acquainted with infirmity;
and as one from whom others hide their faces
he was despised and, and we held him of no account.

(53:4) Surely he has borne our infirmities and carried our diseases;
yet we accounted him stricken, struck down by God, and afflicted

(53:5) But he was wounded for our transgressions,
crushed for our iniquities;
upon him was the punishment that made us whole,
and by his bruises we are healed.

(53:6) All we like sheep have gone astray;
we have all turned to our own way, and the LORD has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.

....

(53:10) Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him with pain.
When you make his life an offering for sin,

he shall see his offspring, and shall prolong his days;
through him the will of the LORD shall prosper.

(53:11) Out of his anguish he shall see light;
he shall find satisfaction through his knowledge.

The righteous one, my servant, shall make many righteous,
and he shall bear their iniquities.

(53:12) Therefore I will allot him a portion with the great, and he
shall divide the spoil with the strong;

because he poured out himself to death,
and was numbered with the transgressors;

yet he bore the sin of many, and made intercession
for the transgressors.²³

The idea that the suffering and death of one innocent person can effect an expiation of the sins of the entire tribe, or universal sin, is a consistent theme in the Hebrew scriptures and is the principal scriptural source of authority for substitutionary Atonement theory through the present day.

Martyrdom. During the time of the Roman persecutions of Christians — intermittently from Nero in Rome, 64 CE, until the tolerance of Constantine, 313 CE — many hard questions were raised about the nature of a powerful and forgiving God who would let

believers be tortured to death. Tertullian, in an apologetic treatise written "against the scorpions," answered stinging questions such as: Is the God of the Christians a bloodthirsty God who prohibits animal sacrifice but demands the blood of martyrs? Are these deaths retaliation for the suffering and death of Christ? Are they sacrifices necessary for Christ to continue to have eternal life? If God is the one, most holy and powerful God, why are innocent believers being killed? If they were sinners, then why are they being killed instead of forgiven, as is promised in baptism? Tertullian assures readers that such suffering and death are somehow directly linked to salvation:

Once for all Christ died for us, once for all He was slain that we might not be slain. If He demands the like from me in return, does He also look for salvation from my death by violence? Or does God importune for the blood of men, especially if He refuses that of bulls and he-goats? Assuredly He had rather have the repentance than the death of the sinner. And how is He eager for the death of those who are not sinners?²⁴

He states again and again that Christ died for salvation, and he turns to the Hebrew scriptures for explanations. Using an obscure passage from Proverbs 9:2, interpreted as a sacrifice, Tertullian compares the work of Christ to the Wisdom (Sophia) figure, who has sacrificed her "sons":

She has certainly slain them wisely if only into life, and reasonably if only into glory. Of murder by a parent, oh the clever form! Oh the dexterity of crime! Oh the proof of cruelty, which has slain for this reason, that he whom it may have slain may not die! . . . Wisdom behaves with firmness in the streets, for with good results does she murder her own sons. . . . You see how divine Wisdom has murdered even her own proper, first-born and only Son, who is certainly about to live, nay, to bring back the others also into life. I can say with the Wisdom of God, it is Christ who gave Himself up for our offenses. Already has Wisdom butchered herself also." [i.e., *like Christ, Wisdom demands a sacrifice from her sons that she has herself already enacted*]²⁵

Besides, he goes on to say, why do people attack the Christian godhead for martyrs' deaths when human sacrifice is so much an accepted feature of the worship of other gods in the culture? He explains that if the choice is between martyrdom and idolatry, and the Christian chooses martyrdom, then it proves the truth of

Christianity, since no one would die for a lie.

Tertullian's obscure and muddled arguments introduce into Latin Christian discourse the idea that salvation somehow hinges on the suffering and death of Christ, who was killed by a parental figure so that both he and others may live forever, that this death somehow expiated or made satisfaction for human sin, and that martyrdom participates in the death of Christ that brings eternal life.

The execution of Christians by the Roman state was not seen as a political issue at the time.

In the face of persecution, imprisonment and death, believers understood that they were being called, by unwavering confession of their Lord, to share the suffering by which Christ had overcome the forces of evil abroad in the world. The death of a martyr—a "witness"—was thus the glorious culmination of a struggle that led to eternal life. . . . This struggle, though, was not envisaged as a fight against Rome and its emperors. It was directed against Satan and his hosts, who held the world in thrall; and the Roman imperium, in spite of its blasphemous pretensions, was an instrument of God to keep evil under relative control.²⁶

Ascetic Practice. In Hellenistic society, asceticism was honored as preparation for contemplative union with God. In Christianity, ascetic practices of moral rigor and mortification were seen as methods of purification of the soul leading to holiness and prayerful experience of Christ. The suffering of asceticism was not in itself holy; holiness was charismatic, ecstatic. Scholars think that early church communities, such as Paul's church in Corinth, were charismatic groups. The descent of the Spirit, or mixing of humanity with divinity during charismatic experience, was considered a salvific gift, and not a transaction with God effected by acts of ascetic discomfort.

Since ascetic practices were shared in common among many religions, early Christian theorists tried to make a clear break with Gnostic ideas of ascetic practices supposed to lead to the release of the soul from the prison of matter and ignorance. Against rival claims of salvific systems, Christians defined their position that salvation is a gift from God effected through the Incarnation. In no way is this gift an accomplishment won by human striving for perfection.

Later on in the development of Western spirituality, after the Roman state became Christian and the persecutions ceased, people

who engaged in self-mortification understood their ascetic suffering to in some way participate in the supreme martyrdom of the state-executed "red martyrs." Monastics and ascetics were known as "white martyrs." The full flowering of this spirituality is discussed in chapter two.

Suffering, Salvation and Gnosticism

The suffering and death of Christ during the crucifixion was not incorporated into an Atonement theory in this period. What pushed the early church (100-300 CE) to develop a discourse of suffering was the need to distinguish Christianity from Gnosticism.

Gnosticism also claimed to be a theology of salvation through knowledge leading to a form of divinization. The Christian doctrines of the incarnation of the divine son and the resurrection of the body flatly contradicted the Gnostic belief that the body and all material reality is inherently evil. Gnostics believed that the savior was not possessed of a material, fleshly body, but somehow "flew away" from the embodied experience of his crucifixion. Conversely, the suffering and death of Jesus followed by his resurrection proves that God is truly incarnated in the created, fleshly, vulnerable, suffering and dying reality of human beings. Considered separately, the crucifixion of Christ was not thought of as accomplishing anything on a cosmic scale. The crucifixion was was a fact that proved a genuine Incarnation and solidarity with creation and human nature. If Christ was divine but did not suffer, then he was not truly incarnate and divinity was not truly united with creation. Therefore, the salvation brought about by Incarnation had not taken place. The understanding of suffering for most Greek patristic authors was less that "suffering *saves*" and more that "suffering *proves*."

Rise of Atonement Theory: Original Sin and Latin Legality

Original Sin. Toward the close of the 4th century, Western Christian anthropology shifts decisively to a theory wherein the will of a human being is fundamentally perverse and contrary to the will of God. The seat of human will is located in the affections, not in the rational mind, or intellect. In Latin theology after Tertullian and Augustine, a human being knowingly chooses to do wrong things out

of an inherent perversity of will which directs the intellect to evil objects. Sin became primarily understood as an inherent disease of the will and not a mistake of the intellect led astray by corrupt caretakers, demons or evil influences. Metaphors of expiation and propitiatory sacrifice began to dominate Christian discourse on salvation. Apparently, the evil forces objectively conquered, or tricked, by Christ in the victory theory became internalized as expressions of human reason in bondage to its own perverse will. The drama of good and evil in the universe was moved "indoors" and became the drama of the human heart.

The seminal development of original sin at this time flowed from the pen of Augustine of Hippo (354-430 CE). In his autobiographical *Confessions*, he wrote for the West the language of the divided self, the perverse soul rather than the ignorant soul.

There was a pear tree near our vineyard, loaded with fruit that was attractive neither to look at nor to taste. Late one night a band of ruffians, myself included, went off to shake down the fruit and carry it away . . . We took away an enormous quantity of pears, not to eat them ourselves, but simply to throw them to the pigs. Perhaps we ate some of them, but our real pleasure consisted in doing something that was forbidden. . . .

What was it, then that pleased me in that act of theft? Which of my Lord's powers did I imitate in a perverse and wicked way? Since I had no real power to break his law, was it that I enjoyed at least the pretence of doing so, like a prisoner who creates for himself the illusion of liberty by doing something wrong, when he has no fear of punishment, under a feeble hallucination of power? . . . Could I enjoy doing wrong for no other reason than that it was wrong?²⁷

For Augustine, sin is perversity, not animal pleasure nor pagan ignorance, nor doing an immorally practical thing such as killing in war. Sin is the perverse choice to do something one has no need to do, for no other reason than because one knows it is wrong, and therefore derives a pleasurable sense of contradictive, self-assertive power from doing it. Since the sinner sins knowingly, salvation can hardly be a matter of education. Original sin is the human propensity to perversity that was first made actual in the sin of Adam and Eve, and is the primary obstacle between humankind and God. The core of Western, or Latin, soteriology narrowed to reversing the effects of original sin, and became focused on the issues of guilt, judgment and

retribution. The obedience or sinlessness of Jesus meant that he never resorted to perverse willful self-assertion but always acted in accord with the will of God. Somehow this sinlessness and obedience to God, which was expressed most fully in Christ's suffering and death during the crucifixion, reversed the universal willful perversity of humanity and/or placated the wrath of God. Western theologians after Tertullian and Augustine became fixated on nailing down precisely how the crucifixion effected salvation.

Latin Legality. The theological differences between Eastern and Western theories reflected differences in the background and training of their major theologians. Clement, Ireneaus and the Cappadoccians had been schooled in Greek philosophy; Tertullian and Augustine had been educated primarily in Roman law.

In Tertullian not merely the scheme of the atonement but all the relations between God and man put on the character of legal transactions. His pages bristle with phrases like "debt," "satisfaction," "guilt," "merit," "compensation." The idea of original sin is the root-idea of this theology: the actual term is, indeed, his invention, though it is not pushed to the length of denying free-will in man after the fall. . . . And the prominence of this conception tends by itself to an emphasis upon the death of Christ, as distinct from the incarnation in general, which was not usual in the earlier Greek theology. . . . Tertullian is perhaps the first Christian writer to represent the death of Christ as the chief purpose of His coming, and he distinctly declares that there would have been no incarnation but for the fall.²⁸

This tendency towards an emphasis on sin in the Western church increased on the heels of the collapse of Imperial Roman jurisdiction and the slow awakening of the church to the realization that the early eschatological expectations of Christianity had not been fulfilled and did not appear to be forthcoming. The general expectation of the church changed from the apocalyptic return of Christ in glory to the abiding presence of Christ in the church. The understanding of holiness acquired a more orderly than charismatic character, and the idea of a heavenly destination developed into the practice of a heavenly jurisdiction. By 600 C.E, in the Western church, an earthly monarchy of justification metaphors had superceded the visionary republic of divinization metaphors.

Summary

Soteriological theories were therefore unstable amalgamations at the time of their patristic formulation, and atonement for sin was one among many metaphors used in conjunction with others to describe the benefits of the Christian faith. There were many sources for metaphors and theologians of the time used them freely, drawing out various nuances to preach and explain salvation in Jesus Christ. A probable method for choice of metaphors was described by Charles Raven in lectures to the Ionian Community:

Ransom . . . made a great deal of sense to a slave group, who longed for nothing more than the day when they would be bought for a price and released — a model which has come to enjoy a new lease on life in liberation theologies, for that same reason. We might add, he did not, that a culture dominated by a belief in ethereal beings, both demonic and good, would welcome news of the conquest of the evil spirits, the 'principalities and powers' and 'the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places' of which St. Paul speaks in Eph 6.12 — the conquest of which Aulén writes in *Christus Victor*. A religious community brought up on the cultus of old Israel would readily carry over the sacrificial concepts to the understanding of the death of Christ, reinforced as it was, with the description of Jesus as the Lamb of God. In feudal times, when duties had to be performed for the overlord, and reparation made for duties unfulfilled, 'satisfaction' inevitably chimed in with medieval social and economic thinking.²⁹

Among historians of this period, speculation varies from scholar to scholar about which metaphor dominated or is most characteristic of the age. They all agree that no systematic theory of Atonement was presented by any writer and that probably the work of Christ was popularly understood as victory over evil forces and the devil, and for an educated minority it was a form of divinization framed in the Logos language of Middle Platonism. In Eastern theological discourse, the place of suffering and death was developed primarily as a refutation of the Gnostic position on the inherent evil of the body; it was not systematically treated as the mechanism of salvation itself through an Atonement.

In the Eastern Church, the Cappadocian Fathers who negotiated the language of the Christological creeds at the ecumenical councils sponsored by the emperors at Constantinople, wrote in Greek and

the Greek Orthodox church continued to develop the divinization strain of salvation theory. The Western Church, influenced by Latin writers Tertullian and Augustine, developed the theory of salvation by expiation and justification, which did not appear in a systematic formulation until posited by Anselm of Canterbury in the 11th century.

The Greek patristic authors shared a vision of salvation in Christ as a glorious and ecstatic fellowship of immortal being in unity with the Logos of God, the source of goodness, truth and beauty. This exuberant sense of victory and eager anticipation of glory fades from Latin Christian writing as the Roman empire crumbles. By the time Gregory the Great (540-604 CE) can write an outline of what will be fully developed later on as the doctrine of purgatory, the Easter horizon of superlative transcendent exaltation seems to have shrunk to the small potatoes of guilt or acquittal. It seems that not every Christian could hope for communion with God, but at least everyone could count on life after death. The expectation of immortality had become commonplace, but the marvelous Incarnational vision of eternal divine fellowship in the glory of God has shrunk to a forensic program of reward and punishment in an afterlife.

In the Western church, original sin became the core concern of soteriological theory by the end of the patristic age. The unbridled metaphors developed by Christians to proclaim the salvation revealed in Jesus Christ during the patristic age were gradually harnessed to the work of pulling one theory into a position of dominance: to be justified as a sinner.

Chapter 2

The Medieval Period: Salvation by Justification

From the beginning of the monastic age (Benedict at Monte Cassino in 529), to the conclusion of the Reformation (Peace of Westphalia in 1648), justice under God's law on earth as a reflection of the hierarchy of heaven was accepted by everyone as the ordering system for personal, religious and civil life. Not to imagine justice as a primary divine attribute was felt to state that God is disorderly and that the will of God is arbitrary or chaotic.¹ The church focused on lawful reparation for sin rather than fellowship with divinity as the mechanism of salvation. The shift in Western soteriology from divinization to justification can be viewed as the shift from theology as "wisdom" to theology as "sure knowledge."

The first important aspect to play into the origins of theology as sure knowledge was the rediscovery of Roman law in the West and its spread in the eleventh century. Without a code of law, society could not have been reorganized sufficiently to allow for the reemergence of cities and urban economies. The bureaucracy needed to sustain city culture was made up of clerics, trained in cathedral and abbey schools. Law came to have a profound impact on the church through the clergy. A more unified church law had repercussions on the study of theology. Thus Anselm's great work on the redemption borrowed its metaphors from the law and the law's concept of the *ordo* as a societal ideal. Law's concern with relationships and with precision played an important formative role in making analysis, precision, clarity, and the making of distinctions important criteria in developing an adequate theology.²

Salvation was understood as justification of the sinner before the supreme divine judge, and justification for human beings had been

made possible by the crucifixion of Christ. Theologians were concerned to define just exactly how this relationship between the crucifixion of Christ, the penitential practice of the church, and the order of society effected personal salvation.

As Hellenistic Greek culture had undergirded the divinization discourse of patristic Christianity and the Eastern Orthodox Church, Latin became the language of literate Christian culture of Western Europe, the language of the monasteries and the church, of civil law and the universities. There were very few and fragmented Greek texts available, and for awhile the study of Greek died out in the West. Augustine's works in Latin were primary theological texts of the early medieval period.

Anselm's Substitutionary Theory of Atonement

When Augustine moved the cosmic drama of the war between good and evil into the theater of the human will and the mechanism of salvation into the interior relations of the Father and the Son in the Trinity, then perverse creations were met by a conflicted creator.³ Humans are perverse because they knowingly do what they know is wrong. God is self-conflicted because God's divine mercy (the Son) is at odds with God's divine justice (the Father). Augustine had then asked what the death of Christ meant in terms of placation of an angry God but had never written a clear, systematic answer.

What is the meaning of being "reconciled through the death of his Son?" Does it mean that while God the Father was angry with us He saw the death of His Son on our behalf and was placated towards us? Can it be the fact that His Son was so far placated towards us as even to deign to die for us, but that the father was so angry with us that, had not the Son died for us, He would not have been placated?⁴

Anselm answered some of these questions. The first systematic formulation of salvation understood as a retribution for human sin rendered unto God by Christ through means of his crucifixion was presented by Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) in his book *Cur Deus Homo?* published in 1098. Known as "substitutionary atonement," or "satisfaction," Anselm's basic tenet is that God the Father must be placated before He can forgive human beings for sin. The predicament of human beings, helpless in the state of original sin, precipitated the Incarnation of Christ the Son, whose suffering

and death during the crucifixion repaired the Father's damaged honor and placated the Father's wrath over sin.

His ideas are laid out in a more academic way than the writings of the patristic authors, which were usually homiletic or apologetic pieces written with oratorical flair to persuade a cosmopolitan reader. Anselm wrote for monks in a rural monastery school, long after the disintegration of the Roman Empire and far from the Mediterranean capitol. Anselm had received a partial education in law at Pavia before he became first Abbot of the Monastery at Bec and later Archbishop of Canterbury. His background in Roman law probably inclined him to use logical arguments to "win his case" for Christianity, and to address the inherent inconsistencies in the victory models.

Anselm repudiated the theory of a ransom paid to the Devil, since he rejected the idea that an evil entity can have any legal claim against God. However, his theory employs a dualistic cosmology that recalls the cosmology of Justin Martyr⁵ in which the serenity of an originally benign cosmos was destroyed by the rebellion of angels, who "sinned in heaven" and then went on to corrupt human beings. He used the dialectical form of a perplexed but able student, "Boso," questioning the masterful teacher, "Anselm":

[Anselm] When man was created in paradise without sin, he was set, as it were, for God between God and the devil, in order to overcome the devil by not consenting to his persuasions to sin. This would have vindicated and honored God and confounded the devil, since man, though the weaker, would have refused to sin on earth at the instance of that very devil who, though the stronger, sinned in heaven without persuasion. But though man could easily have done this, and was coerced by no force, he readily allowed himself to be overcome by persuasion alone, in accordance with the will of the devil, and contrary to the will and honor of God.

[Boso] What are you driving at?

[Anselm] Judge for yourself if it is not contrary to God's honor for man to be reconciled to him still bearing the reproach of the outrage he inflicted on God, without first honoring God by conquering the devil, just as he dishonored him when he was conquered by the devil. But the victory ought to be like this. Strong and immortal in power, man freely accepted the devil's temptation to sin, and thus justly incurred the penalty of mortality; now, weak and mortal as he made himself, he ought through the distress of death to conquer the devil,

so as not to sin at all. But this is what he cannot do as long as, through the wound of the first sin, he is conceived and born in sin.⁶

When Adam and Eve, as vassals of God in God's power struggle with the Devil, betrayed their divine overlord by succumbing to the temptations of the enemy, they violated the personal "honor" of God, to whom was due perfect personal loyalty. They then owed to God a personal "satisfaction" beyond simple reinstatement of original loyalty. Their situation is complicated by the loss of their original "strong and immortal power" that they had before the Fall. Adam and Eve sinned with full power, which caused them to lose that power. Then they had no power with which to make amends.

And it is not enough merely to return what was taken away; in view of the insult committed, he [Adam] must give back more than he took away. For it is not enough for someone who had injured another's health to restore his health without making some recompense for the pain and injury suffered, and, similarly, it is not enough for someone who violates another's honor to restore the honor, unless he makes some kind of restitution that will please him who was dishonored, according to the extent of the injury and dishonor. . . . everyone who sins must repay to God the honor that he has taken away, and this is the satisfaction that every sinner ought to make to God.⁷

Satisfaction, then, is something more than restoration or punishment. An injured party can claim, for example, as is done in contemporary courts of law, "mental distress and suffering, loss of dignity . . ." and sue for personal compensation beyond the penalty mandated by criminal law. "Civil damages" can be levied, as recompense due to the injured party for insult added to injury.

"Boso" asks why God can't simply forgive humankind, since humans are required to forgive each other. "Anselm" answers that if God were to forgive humankind without first receiving satisfaction, then God would commit an injustice to himself, and since God is always and entirely just, he cannot be unjust to himself because that would contradict his own nature. Therefore it is impossible for God to forgive without first extracting a satisfaction.

But to this solution an unalterable impediment exists in that the now fallen, weak, mortal beings cannot do what it takes to recompense the divine honor of God. God's honor is infinite, no finite being can render sufficient satisfaction. Yet no other being owes

anything to God. The situation is at an impasse. This predicament forces the Incarnation:

For God will not do it, because he does not owe it, and man will not do it, because he cannot. Therefore for the God-Man to do this, the person who is to make this satisfaction must be both perfect God and perfect man, because none but true God can make it, and none but true man owes it. Thus, while it is necessary to find a God-Man in whom the integrity of both natures is preserved, it is no less necessary for these two complete natures to meet in one person . . .⁸

Therefore, the advent of human sin determines the Incarnation. The Incarnation in itself does not save, but rather it is the satisfaction rendered unto God for the damage to God's honor that saves. The suffering death of the God-man removes the obstacle of insult from the equation, and only then can God forgive humans the injury of sin.

In this substitutionary atonement theory, Christ does not obtain victory over the Devil, nor is Christ's work to turn the deep attention of humankind back to its proper object, God. The work of Christ repairs the damaged honor of *God*: the work of Christ is placation of God's wrath.

Cultural Context of the Substitutionary Theory of Atonement

Anselm's theory was proposed against a cultural horizon wherein three primary factors can be seen to constitute both its proposal and its widespread and enduring acceptance: a) Polity: the reception of Latin legalism by the tribal and feudal overlord systems of Northern Europe and Britain, and the subsequent development of cities and civil law; b) Penance: the monastic spirituality of the primary evangelists of Europe and their emphasis on private confession and penance for justification and holiness, which eclipses communal Eucharist as the primary religious practice of the medieval Christian; and c) Piety: the relation of Atonement theory and the value of personal suffering to the development of popular sympathetic identification with Christ's suffering, the rise of the mendicant preaching orders and their promotion of Christocentric lay piety, and the proliferation of lay devotional practice based on texts such as *The Imitation of Christ*.

Polity

The tribal cultures of Northern Europe were pragmatic, unphilosophical peoples clustered together in small kinship-based groups organized by strong personal loyalty to a chieftan or overlord. They were accustomed to reconciling injuries and insults among themselves with a system of compensations, or satisfactions. The price of a specific offense, to be paid by the offender to the offended or to the offended one's family, was established by local custom. This tit-for-tat system was adjusted on a sort of "sliding scale" keyed to the relative status of offended and offending parties. The common and prevalent alternative was an escalating blood vendetta.

Between the liege and his vassals existed a relationship based on mutual trust: the liege procured power and protection; the vassal for his part promised servitude and tribute. The honor of the liege did not only bear upon his person, but had also a social dimension: where the lord was honored and served, order and peace ruled. . . .

The medieval feudal system left its mark on the image of God. God was presented as a feudal lord . . . The punishment for insulting a lord is heavier of course than for dishonoring a subordinate. Latin jurisdiction played also a part in this: for justice to be done, satisfaction is required (*unicuique suum*, to everyone his due).⁹

Teutonic culture amalgamated with Roman law had an impact on the image of God, bringing it "down to earth," and making it practical, legal, transactional and personal, rather than transcendent, speculative, abstract, and philosophical. Anselm framed his Atonement theory of salvation in juridical and transactional terms amenable to the world view of the feudal culture from which his students came.

The political outlook had changed greatly since the days of Augustine and Gregory. The Roman Empire stood no longer as the visible embodiment of the idea of justice, and had been replaced by the more concrete personal dignity of the great feudal overlords. Justice and law had now become a personal matter, and any breach of the law was a direct offence against a person. And thus the whole conception of satisfaction was bound up closely with the feudal ideal. As always the doctrine of Redemption was affected by current politics.¹⁰

The patristic tradition of the church as an urban Pauline community, separated from a sophisticated Mediterranean city

culture and knit together through Eucharistic participation into the body of Christ, did not provide a familiar framework of religious praxis for the rural and tribal world of Germanic culture. Rather, feudal people found themselves in the rural, tribal world of the Hebrews in the Old Testament, and took on aspects of the Hebraic ideas of divine kingship and right relationship to God through cultic worship and atonement for sins.¹¹

Penance

In contrast to the historians cited above who support Roman, Germanic or Hebraic Law as the primary source for Atonement theory, Gustaf Aulén insists that penitential practice accounts for the forensic direction of soteriology in the medieval church:

It must be strongly emphasized that it was on the basis of the penitential system that the Latin theory grew up. The suggestion sometimes made, that the origin of Anselm's doctrine is to be found in Germanic Law, is either beside the mark or flatly incorrect. The Latin idea of penance provides the sufficient explanation of the Latin doctrine of the Atonement.¹²

The medieval practice of reconciliation begins in early monastic history with the penitence spirituality of the hermits and cenobites of the southeastern Mediterranean desert regions in the third century. Many of the first missionaries to Ireland and Britain had been Syrian monks, whose spirituality was centered on a personal quest for holiness aided by the one-on-one guidance of a spiritual director. Later on in the sixth century, their heirs, British and Irish monks, crossed to the continent from the island communities founded by the early missionaries and contributed substantially to the conversion of Europe. They brought with them their Celtic practice of private confession and works of penance.

Metaphors for a metaphysical reunion with God used by the Hellenistically-educated clerics and monks who originally evangelized northern Europe became concrete or "mechanical" models in the minds of more empirically-oriented tribal Celtic and Teutonic converts. Allusive metaphors such as ransom, sacrifice and redemption were re-interpreted as actual transactions. A sense of moral rather than the ontological progress dominated church ethos and undergirded the spread and popularity of the practice of penance.

At the same time that penance became the primary means of conversion, catechesis and devotion, the celebration of Eucharist became privatized, isolated and clericalized. The Mass became understood as a sacrifice that a priest could perform in solitude, as an objective action of "satisfaction" where the presence of the community was unnecessary. Complex church liturgies were performed in Latin by clerics and monks while partitioned off from the vernacular-speaking congregation. Anxious about spilling any of the real blood of Christ, the laity withdrew first from the cup, and then from the body, the host. The high point of lay participation at a Eucharist was to view the host at the time of its elevation at the altar; Eucharist was reduced to "gazing."

The Eucharist had been, for the early church, the supreme expression of its unity. By 1050 regular communion by the people had become rare, but there was no systematic attempt to restore it. The new practices which arose in the celebration of the Mass, such as the elevation of the host, were directed, not towards the restoration of community, but towards the kindling of personal devotion.¹³

For lay people, the primary praxis of the church shifted from union with God in the body of Christ through Eucharistic fellowship to justification of the individual sinner before a divine judge through private confession and penance.

Private confession and penance was initially condemned by the church, but after failing to stamp it out, the church canonized the practice at the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 C.E., and brought it under ecclesiastical regulation. It remained the form of the sacrament of reconciliation in the catholic church until the Reformation, and continued in the Roman Catholic tradition until the sacrament of reconciliation was renewed at Vatican II in the 1960s, centuries after its early medieval culture of origin had passed from the world.

Piety

Perhaps as a response to spiritual deprivation due to liturgical and sacramental exclusion, a great hunger was expressed among lay people for spiritual practice beyond the rite of penance. They were unable to devote themselves to the pursuit of holiness through a separated life of study and liturgical prayer in monasteries and convents, and became estranged from the liturgy and Eucharist of

their parish churches. A devotional spirituality rooted in strong emotional identification with the suffering of Christ during the crucifixion developed. The Passion of Christ became the dominant motif in the popular theater of salvation in continental Europe during the 13th century. By marking its appearance in art, the suffering of Christ as a focus for piety can be dated from about 1236:

The first traceable crucifix with a deceased Christ bears the date 1236 (by Giunta Pisano); the last traceable one of the other, 'triumphant,' type dates from 1238. The early medieval Christ 'stands,' is crowned and dressed in a tunic. His face is serene and peaceful. He radiates a divine calm. The late medieval Christ however, hangs with his arms bowed on the cross, his head resting upon his shoulder, the face contorted with pain, the feet crossed over each other and nailed with one single nail. This is a moving depiction of horrible suffering. The solemn, victorious Crucified has made way for the tormented, suffering figure of Christ. The early scholastic doctrine of the satisfaction can undoubtedly be regarded as one of the reasons for this evolution: it created a sensibility among Christians for the self-sacrifice of Jesus' suffering and death.¹⁴

Passion piety was fostered and nurtured by the new mendicant orders that arose in the 12th and 13th centuries. Dedicated to urban service, Franciscans and Dominicans preached conversion of life and forgiveness of sins to lay people in cities and town centers. To assist in the development of Christocentric spirituality, Franciscan friars proliferated the devotional practice of meditating on the nativity of Jesus in the stable and the stations of the cross, the *via dolorosa*. In Bonaventure's biography of the founder of his order, *The Life of St. Francis*, he describes the onset of *stigmata* in the Saint's body after he had received a vision of the Crucified Seraph on the mountain of La Verna:

Eventually he understood by a revelation from the Lord that divine providence had shown him this vision so that, as Christ's lover, he might learn in advance that he was to be totally transformed into the likeness of Christ crucified, not by the martyrdom of his flesh, but by the fire of his love consuming his soul. . . .

As the vision disappeared, it left in his heart a marvelous ardor and imprinted on his body markings that were no less marvelous. Immediately the marks of nails began to appear in his hands and feet just as he had seen a little before in the figure of the man crucified. His hands and feet seemed to be pierced through the center by nails,

with the heads of the nails appearing on the inner side of the hands and the upper side of the feet and their points on the opposite sides. The heads of the nails in his hands and his feet were round and black; their points were oblong and bent as if driven back with hammer, and they emerged from the flesh and stuck out beyond it. Also his right side, as if pierced with a lance, was marked with a red wound from which his sacred blood often flowed, moistening his tunic and underwear.¹⁵

This interpretation of the appearance of the *stigmata* is that the Saint's life has become so identified with and so conformed to the life of Christ through ardent love that his body has conformed to the wounds in the body of Jesus. The intention of this Christocentric piety is union with God through love of the Son.

Heinrich Suso (1295?-1360 CE), German Dominican mystic and contemporary of Meister Eckhart, wrote several small books in the vernacular German of the Rhineland to assist his spiritual directees, mostly cloistered Dominican nuns, with their interior reflective prayer life. *The Little Book of Eternal Wisdom* is a guided meditation on the wounds of Christ in the form of a didactic conversation between a wandering soul, the "servant," and "eternal Wisdom:"

The servant: O sweet, loving Lord, this is like the music of sweet strings to a suffering person. Lord, if only you would play such songs for me in my suffering, I would gladly suffer. Then I would feel better with suffering than without it.

Response of eternal Wisdom: No, listen to the music from the taut strings of a person suffering for God (and see) how rich it sounds and how sweet the tones are:

In the eyes of the world suffering is repugnant, but in my sight it is something immeasurably valuable. Suffering quenches my anger and wins my favor. Suffering makes a person worthy of my love because a person in suffering resembles me.

. . . . Look, the person who really knows how advantageous suffering is should accept it from God a valuable gift. . . . Suffering keeps the soul humble and teaches it patience. It is a guardian of purity and brings the crown of eternal happiness . . . Suffering removes sin, shortens purgatory, repels temptations, causes faults to vanish and renews the spirit . . . Suffering is a (punishing) rod of love, a fatherly chastening for my chosen ones. . . . I would prefer to create unnecessary suffering rather than let my friends go without suffering, because in suffering all virtues prove themselves, a person is adorned, one's neighbor is improved, and God is praised. . . .¹⁶

In this passage, Suso seems to describe suffering as valuable in itself. All sorts of benefits are derived from it, although union with God through passionate love of Jesus Christ is not one of them. Although the ultimate intention of the book is to edify religious life, at times suffering is portrayed as a tool for the work of one's spiritual self-improvement, and as such becomes separated from the apostolic foundation it has in Bonaventure's account of Francis.

Attributed to Thomas a Kempis (1380?-1471), *The Imitation of Christ* was the most circulated book of the medieval period. He finds that conformity to Christ the Crucified will render the soul confident before Christ the Judge.

Sometimes an individual, because of his desire to be conformed to Christ's cross, is powerfully strengthened by his desire to suffer these trials and tribulations rather than to be without them. He firmly believes that the greater and the heavier the burden he suffers the more pleasing he is to God. . . .¹⁷

Nothing is more acceptable to God, nor is there anything more beneficial in this world than being willing to suffer for Christ. If you were given the choice you ought to prefer to suffer adversity for Christ's sake rather than to be comforted by many consolations. In this way you make yourself more like Christ and model yourself more closely on the saints.¹⁸

When the Lord comes in judgment this sign of the cross will be in the heavens and all the servants of the cross who, in their lifetime, conformed themselves to Jesus Crucified [Rom. 8:29] will approach Christ the Judge with full confidence.¹⁹

It can be seen that there is a variety of theologies within the spectrum of the piety of the Passion: St. Francis is the visionary lover of Christ, Suso recommends the spiritual tool of suffering, Kempis asserts its eschatological advantage. Emotional union with Christ through suffering is both a path to consolation and holiness in this life, and a means of escaping the wrath of God in the next.

By the middle of the 14th century almost all branches of soteriological thought, ecclesiastical, theological, and popular, become centered on the crucifixion of Christ.

Devotion to the Passion acted both as a complement to the Latin doctrine of the Atonement and as a counterpoise to it. It is, indeed, not surprising that an emotional mysticism of this type should appear side by side with the thoroughly rationalistic and juridical theory of the satisfaction of God's justice.²⁰

Increasingly in the Western church, the direct experience of affective union with God was called "mystical" religion, and the pursuit of the forgiveness of sins through participation in the rituals of the established church(es) was called "orthodox" religion. The "orthodox" theory of the Atonement and the remission of sin undergirds the power and authority of the institutional church(es). The so-called "mystical" or affective union religion, as practiced by lay persons in secular and religious communities, floats toward its margins. Yet both of these apparently divergent paths focused on the crucifixion.

Pre-Reformation Contradictions to the Atonement Theory

Peter Abelard. Anselm's theory was most ably disputed by his younger cohort Peter Abelard (1079-1142). Abelard was a charismatic, restless and contentious theologian who taught at the university of Paris in the early years of its establishment as a center of medieval intellectual life. Abelard objected to the illogical transactions in Anselm's satisfaction theory whereby God the Father extracts satisfaction from himself as the Son, according to the dictates of a higher law of justice. He also disparaged the picture of God as a Father pleased by the torture and death of his innocent Son.

In what manner have we been made more righteous through the death of the Son of God than we were before, so that we ought to be delivered from punishment? And to whom was the price of blood paid for our redemption but to him in whose power we were—that is, to God himself, who (as we have said) handed us over to his torturer? For it is not the torturers but the masters of those who are held captive who arrange or receive such ransoms. Again, how did he release these captives for a price if he himself exacted or settled the price for release of the same? Indeed, how cruel and wicked it seems that anyone should demand the blood of an innocent person as the price for anything, or that it should in any way please him that an innocent man should be slain— still less that God should consider the death of his Son so agreeable that by it he should be reconciled to the whole world!²¹

Abelard was a more rigorous logician than Anselm, and he further objected to the satisfaction theory on the basis of its philosophical Realism.²² Abelard had been a student of Roscellinus (1050-1125), who had taken a nominalist position on the universals and had been controverted by Anselm. In contradiction to the universals of

Realism, Abelard taught that there are no universals; the "universal" is only a name in the mind of the language user for perceived likenesses. Therefore, there is no "universal human nature" that bears the stain or debt of original sin, that is fully present in each individual person, and that can be redeemed once and for all by the satisfaction of the God-Man. In Abelard's alternative system, the individual is what is most real, and individuals are saved one-by-one in a one-to-one relationship. Christianity is salvific because the story of the love-unto-death of Jesus Christ for humankind inspires an answering love and devotion from the individual hearer, which supercedes his or her compulsion to sin.

Yet everyone becomes more righteous—by which we mean a greater lover of the Lord—after the Passion of Christ than before, since a realized gift inspires greater love than one which is only hoped for. Wherefore, our redemption through Christ's suffering is that deeper affection in us which not only frees us from slavery to sin, but also wins for us the true liberty of sons of God, so that we do all things out of love rather than fear—love to him who has shown us such grace that no greater can be found, as he himself asserts, saying, "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Of this love the Lord says elsewhere, "I am come to cast fire on the earth, and what will I, but that it blaze forth?" so does he bear witness that he came for the express purpose of spreading this true liberty of love amongst men.²³

Abelard's theory is called the "moral influence" or the "subjective" theory of salvation, in contrast to Anselm's "objective" theory of satisfaction.

Abelard's ideas were not widely accepted at the time he proposed them. In 1141, the Synod of Sens condemned many of his works and affirmed that Christ became human in order to deliver humans from the dominion of the devil. But about 200 years later, philosophers of the nominalist position argued successfully to similar conclusions as those of Abelard.

Other medieval theologians argued against the Atonement theory on the basis that it compromised the freedom of God. Since the Atonement theory of Anselm places the obstacle to salvation on the side of God, who is bound to withhold forgiveness until satisfaction is made, then the ability of God to choose to forgive or not to forgive is conditioned by the "law of justice." If this is so, then either there

exists a higher principle or power in the universe than God, which compromises the univocal omnipotence of God (polytheism), or God's mercy and God's justice are internally irreconcilable and God is in conflict with Godself, which compromises the perfection of the Godhead.

John Duns Scotus (1266?-1308), a Franciscan theologian who taught at Paris and Oxford, saw these inherent contradictions in the satisfaction theory and argued that the sin of mortal Adam could not have caused a conflict in immortal God, and that the integrity of God is not challenged by reconciliation of God's attributes of justice and mercy.

Scotus quite abandons the Augustinian and Anselmic tradition of sin as of infinite importance in God's sight. Since man is finite his sin is finite too and demands neither infinite satisfaction nor infinite punishment. An angel, or even a man, if only he were free from original sin, might have made the Atonement, had God willed so to accept it. This conclusion is inevitable upon the presuppositions from which Scotus sets out. If everything is referred to the acceptatio of God, there is clearly no limit to that which God may choose to accept. . . .

No necessity dominates the Divine will. God is free.²⁴

Therefore, the coming of Christ to the world was part of the creation of the World, although Scotus does say that it was for salvation. God could foresee that humans would misuse their created powers of freedom. Long before creation was begun God built into it a plan of salvation for errors which were bound to accrue from the donation of free will to human beings. Christ would have come even if Adam and Eve had never sinned; however, God could foresee their sin and made provision for it in God's overall plan to bestow divine fellowship on human beings.

Scotus held a high estimation of human capacity for good. He believed that God was more concerned with lavishing reward for goodness than damning for sin. God "accepts" whatever good acts humans can manage to do, and then rewards them beyond what those acts are worth. Scotus wrote that God rewards human beings according to the measure of the freedom and liberality of God's divine love rather than human ideas of the principles of "strict justice."

. . . it must be known that [it is] by eternal divine acceptance, by which God from eternity, seeing this act elicited by such principles, has willed to ordain it toward the reward, has willed its merit; which when considered accordingly by divine acceptance, would not, according to strict justice, be worthy of such reward from its intrinsic goodness of its own principles. This is so because the reward is always greater than the good in merit and strict justice does not render a greater for a lesser good. And so it is well said that God always rewards beyond worth, universally beyond certain worth which an act merits, — since that such be worthy of merit, this is beyond nature and its intrinsic goodness, from gratuitous divine acceptance; and even more, beyond that other which normally would be accepting the act, whenever God rewards by pure liberality.²⁵

God is not busy with justice and judgment. God is not estranged from human beings and God's goodness, intrinsic and eternal, overwhelms human evil. The mercy, goodness and freedom of God — God's "acceptance" — must surpass the meager rewards and revengful punishments that attend human conceptions of justice. In Scotus' work there is a recovery of the early patristic vision of the glory and generosity of God in the matter of human destiny that runs against the grain of his time.

Atonement Theory During The Reformation

During the Reformation period, from Luther's Theses in 1517 to the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, all Western churches focused on justification of the sinner to the virtual exclusion of any other soteriological model. Whether by grace or election, by decision or by identification, justification, derived from an Atonement wrought by the crucifixion of Christ, was almost universally accepted.

How profoundly Anselm's formulation did in fact continue to determine late medieval soteriology can be gauged from the self-evident way in which the central ideas of his treatises on the atonement — the conflicting claims of justice and mercy in God, the need for rendering satisfaction to the offended honor of god, and the "necessary" sufficiency of the death of Christ the God-man as the price of this satisfaction — were employed throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.²⁶

The divergent churches appropriated the crucifixion of Jesus in different ways. The Roman Catholic church of the counter-

reformation painted and sculpted the suffering of Christ and the ecstasy of the saints and distributed the superabundant merits of grace through the sacraments. The Reformed traditions preached the forgiveness of sin, won by the obedient suffering of Christ during the crucifixion, that is mediated by hearing and confessing the Word of the gospel. Early dissenters of the catholic church, such as John Wycliffe and John Hus, believed it as well as did their persecutors, and later on dissenters from the Reformed churches, such as the Baptists and the Pietists, also believed it.

The Lutheran position is expressed in the Augsburg Confession of 1530, Article III on The Son of God:

. . . there is one Christ, true God and true man, who was truly born, suffered, was crucified, died, and was buried in order to be a sacrifice not only for original sin but also for all other sins and to propitiate God's wrath. ²⁷

And Article IV on Justification:

. . . we cannot obtain forgiveness of sin and righteousness before God by our own merits, works or satisfactions, but that we receive forgiveness of sin and become righteous before God by grace, for Christ's sake, through faith, when we believe that Christ suffered for us and that for his sake our sin is forgiven and righteousness and eternal life are given to us. . . . ²⁸

The Puritan formulation, which became the dominant standard for Presbyterians, Congregationalists and a basis for the Baptist Creeds, can be found in The Westminster Confession of Faith, 1646. This confessional statement confirmed satisfaction Atonement theory:

V. The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, which he through the eternal spirit once offered up unto God, hath fully satisfied the justice of his Father, and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given unto him. ²⁹

The Church of England, in Article XXXI of the 39 Articles of 1563, calls the crucifixion of Christ an oblation, a term later echoed by Methodism:

XXXI. Of the one Oblation of Christ finished upon the Cross. The Offering of Christ once made is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction, for all the sins of the whole world,

both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone.³⁰

Just as the patristic age focused its controversies on the divinity of Christ when the "work of Christ" was understood as divinization, the controversies of the Reformation were focused on the protocols of purchase and pardon when the "work of Christ" was understood as justification.

The storms of controversy usually whirled around questions about how the justification effected by Christ was distributed to human beings. For example: Is the merit of Christ available to believers exclusively through the Church and her clergy; and if so, then which church is the true church? Is salvation predestined by God, as Augustine concluded, or achieved by works, as Augustine insisted Pelagius had concluded? Does salvation occur by means of adoption into the eternal life of the Son, according to Calvin, or by imputation of the sinlessness of Christ to sinners, according to Luther? Was salvation procured by Christ of necessity, as Anselm asserted about the God-Man, or appropriately because it was most suitable, as Aquinas wrote, or just arbitrarily, as Ockham was accused of saying? Do sacraments administered by priests of the Church infuse actual grace into the souls of participants, or does preaching of the Word by inspired ministers quicken the implanted spark of faith in hearers? Is human appropriation of salvation an active work of cooperation or a passive state of election? All of these questions followed upon a basic assumption that the substitutionary suffering and death of Christ during the crucifixion effected salvation by justification for human beings.

The "Penal" Version of Atonement Theory. In their various formulas, Protestant theologians tended to place the punishment due to sinners on an objective, abstract legal basis instead of the feudal idea of personal satisfaction rendered to an overlord. As a result, the theater of salvation changes from a face-to-face situation towards one of conformity to principles set within the constitutional character of the developing nation states of Northern Europe. Nevertheless, post-Reformation writers continued to use the terms of Anselmic theory and combine them with the idioms of crucifixion spirituality in thier expositions of the faith. This muddlement of metaphor and theory contributed to the sectarian estrangement escalating with Christianity.

... the age when the doctrine of the Atonement thus became a pivot of theological thinking was also an age when new canons of thought were rapidly developing. . . . And nowhere is this change more patent than in the conceptions of political theory, conceptions which have always exercised a profound influence upon the formulations of doctrines of the Atonement. Political theory had made great strides since the days of Anselm. The feudalistic principle had to a great extent worked itself out, and the conception of abstract law was reasserting itself beside that of the personal dignity of individuals, which was indeed coming to be viewed rather as a sovereign right vested in individual representatives of the the abstract law. And thus law came to be regarded as having a certain absolute intrinsic validity, claiming punishment from the offender not on personal grounds, nor on grounds of expediency, but simply on grounds of justice. . . . The Reformers were certainly not aware that they were departing from the Anselmic position, and they make free use of Anselmic language. . . . But it was only natural that the new intellectual atmosphere should affect their formulations of doctrine, and while the phrases of the Satisfaction theory were still often used, especially at first, in reality the whole conception of the nature of Christ's work was changed.³¹

Reformed theologian Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) incorporated the nominalist critique on the freedom of God into his version of the Atonement theory. His synthesis pushes substitutionary Atonement theory into what is known as The Penal Theory. In Grotius' formulation, punishment proves God's right to demand obedience, since if it wasn't extracted, God may not in fact have had the power to extract it. God did not really need to extract it, because God is free to forgive, but God did it anyway, as a demonstration of sovereign justice and power. The punishment endured by Christ was undertaken to display the wrathful power of God for the purpose of warning and correcting the fickle tendency of human beings to invest their faith in powers other than the ultimate power of God. In short, God decreed the Atonement to establish the Christian state. Similar to Abelard's moral influence theory, the crucifixion in itself is not efficacious; but unlike Abelard, a punitive display of abstract justice is substituted for Abelard's sympathetic appeal to devotion. This abstraction of divine justice is one of the factors in the rise of "Protestant scholasticism" which prompts the formation of evangelical lay piety (next chapter).

The Tridentine Formula of Justification. In response to the challenges of the Reformers, the Roman Catholic church renewed itself in the long process of the Council of Trent, 1545-1563. The Roman Catholic conciliarists made clear their position on justification: the doctrine of the superabundant merits of Christ and the Saints was upheld, and it was clearly stated that the merits of Christ are not "substituted" nor "imputed" to the sinner, but rather the sinner is actually, ontologically changed into a holy "state of grace."

Chapter VII. In What the Justification of the Sinner Consists, and What Are its Causes. (1547)

. . . This disposition or preparation is followed by justification itself, which is not only a remission of sins but also the sanctification and renewal of the inward man through the voluntary reception of the grace and gifts whereby an unjust man becomes just and from being an enemy becomes a friend, that he may be an heir according to hope of life everlasting. The causes of this justification are: the final cause is the glory of God and of Christ and life everlasting; the efficient cause is the merciful God . . . ; the meritorious cause in His most beloved only begotten, our Lord Jesus Christ who, . . . merited for us justification by His most holy passion on the wood of the cross and made satisfaction for us to God the Father; the instrumental cause is the sacrament of baptism . . . ; finally the single formal cause is the justice of God, not that by which He Himself is just, but that by which He makes us just, . . . and not only are we reputed but we are truly called and are just, receiving justice within us, each one according to his own measure, which the Holy Ghost distributes to everyone as he wills, and according to each one's disposition and co-operation.³²

In the Roman Catholic understanding of salvation, justification never becomes distinct from the ideas of divinization and glorification, and retains the ontological depth of that term explored in chapter one. Salvation is not a change in the disposition of God towards sinners, but a real change of personal being. Possibly this is due to the retention of a kind of Realism as the metaphysical substrate of its theology, which also undergirds the transubstantial theory of the Eucharist. However, influence from the legal character of the culture became manifest in the ongoing casuistical analysis of sins and penances in the administration of the sacrament of Reconciliation.

Reformed Contradiction to Atonement Theory

Faustus Socinus (1534-1604) believed that both the Atonement theory and the Trinity were both unbiblical and he attacked the Atonement theory in his book: *Of Jesus Christ the Savior*. He denied any salvific efficacy to the death of Christ. Socinus felt the crucifixion would have been merely another murder of an innocent man but for the fact of the Resurrection. The truest purpose of the crucifixion is as a necessary preliminary to the Resurrection, and the Resurrection is the revelation of God's intention for all human beings. The substitutionary Atonement theory contradicts the freedom and power of God to forgive and make new. He argued that forgiveness and satisfaction are incompatible, since if amends must be made before forgiveness can be bestowed, then it is not the free gift of forgiveness but merely an earned restitution. Further, if sin deserves eternal death and/or eternal punishment, then the suffering and death of Jesus can hardly have satisfied that requirement, since he neither suffered eternally nor died eternally, but was resurrected to eternal life after about six days of a suffering and death-like experience. Socinus denied the inherent divinity of Christ the Son, and rejected the Trinitarian formulation of the Godhead.

Socinus' theological work was elaborated in *The Racovian Catechism* by his disciples and published in Poland in 1605. It was later incorporated into the theological foundation of the Unitarian churches. In this *Catechism*, "redemption," when taken literally, is a false explanation of how God effected salvation through Jesus Christ. But, when used metaphorically, it is true:

[Q.] Why does the Holy Spirit use a metaphorical rather than a literal term? [scripture is thought to be inspired by the Holy Spirit]

[A.] Because this metaphorical term [redemption] expresses more elegantly the expense which God and Christ bestowed on our deliverance, and therefore the love of both towards us: for a deliverance may possibly be accomplished without love, and particularly without great love; but the deliverance which is procured at the expense not of money but "much more of this own blood," could not be effected without the highest love. "

The word "redemption," does not describe an actual transaction; it is not to be taken literally. Rather it is used by the Holy Spirit as a metaphor for the extent of God's love for people. It means that God's

offer of love and salvation is not a thing that can be bought or paid for, it is a personal reality offered at ultimate personal cost. Redemption is not a mechanism of salvation, but a metaphor for the right meaning of salvation: total personal self-gift motivated by the highest love.

The Nominalist Erosion of Salvation Metaphysics

Nominalism is the philosophical bridge to the theology of the modern period and the methodological underpinning of the material positivism of the Enlightenment. It was a terminal position in a controversy of great concern to medieval philosophical theologians. It was called the problem of the universals.

The patristic writers, Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas, and Scotus all assumed a correspondence between human concepts of ultimate reality and actual ultimate metaphysical (or supernatural or ontological) reality. Individual things exist in the material world because they are 'in-formed' by divine ideas (or essences). The concept in the human mind was assumed to be an intuitive mirroring, or knowledge, of the divine idea in a thing. Theologians who assumed that a noun is a human language equivalent for an intuited divine idea, or "universal," were known as Realists (the concept is truly real). Divine ideas bring individual things into existence out of the next-to-nothingness of matter.

Theologians who believed that a noun was merely a convenient human language term for a perceived likeness among things, and that no universals exist outside of the mind, were known as Nominalists (the concept is only a name). Individual things just exist by themselves. The reality humans can know is just a bunch of individual things that exist and it is convenient to classify them for human purposes with collective terms such as nouns.

William of Ockham (1285?-1349?), Franciscan philosopher and theologian, took up this controversy and argued it practically to silence. How it affected the understanding of soteriological justice is a good example of how it affected theology in general. Ockham "proved" that human names for the attributes of God did not necessarily correspond to the reality of God. Since the human concept of "justice" is merely a collective term for what a language group agrees to call the resemblance among a bunch of individual behaviors, it cannot be predicated, or assumed to be also a real

attribute, of God. Since no one can presume to know what justice is for God, then God is "free" to forgive or damn as God wills. Philosophical speculation about the nature of God is merely human language about material existence and in no way binds or predicts the reality of God. All people can know of God is the contents of revelation.

Although Ockham meant to liberate the truth of revelation from the doubts of philosophy and make the mind a safe place for faith, his work established the nominalism that paved the way for the empirical footsteps of the Enlightenment. The principle of theoretical construction in science which prefers the simplest explanation of those available for a given phenomena is derived in part from "Ockham's Razor," or "Plurality is not to be postulated without necessity."³⁴ In the modern period, the individual material thing becomes the locus of ultimate reality. Metaphysical or ontological reality becomes a subjective assertion that cannot be empirically established, and philosophy tends to reduce to the study of linguistics.

The nominalist critique undermined the metaphysical basis of the Anselmian formula by doubting the universals upon which the concept of original sin rests and asserting the freedom of God (i.e., God is not bound by "justice" to extract a satisfaction; God could have forgiven Adam, or anyone). This critique, or razoring, of the ontological dimension destabilized the Realism that undergirded both substitutionary Atonement and divinization theories of salvation. For those Christian thinkers who accepted the nominalist critique, the proper realm of theology was reduced to the revelation in scripture, Church tradition, and the interior "subjective" territory of morality, feeling and intuition. The two-truths culture — science and religion — of modern Western civilization followed.

Summary

Atonement Theory and Politics. During the medieval era, an overall change in governance from feudal loyalty to national constitution corresponds to a change from Anselm's personal satisfaction to the honor of an overlord to Grotius' civil penalty under the federal God of right government. The shift in Atonement theory from personal satisfaction to civil penalty is the shift from

propitiation to expiation. In propitiation, the wrath of God over the insult to God's personal honor can only be placated by the humiliation of the God-man during the crucifixion. In expiation, the justice of God requires that human wrongdoing be punished, and Christ absorbs the punishment in place of humans.

This shift occurs at about the same time as the power base of European polity shifts from feudal and monarchical family landholding to parliamentary procedure and international banking. The "subjective" personal honor of the head of a clan is replaced by "objective" rules of criminal law and international protocol. Anselm's satisfaction theory was a cultural adaptation of Christian metaphor and Greek speculative metaphysics into feudal law. The Reformers adapted Anselm's feudal personal honor system to the legal principle structure of the developing nation states.

Atonement Theory and Suffering. Note that in Anselm's theory proper, human suffering cannot by itself effect salvation. The utter inadequacy of mortal human suffering to repair the damaged honor of immortal God forced the Incarnation, so that the human nature of the God-man could offer to God the placation that only the divine nature of the God-man could deliver. Therefore, all human suffering undertaken to gain salvation would be useless or even presumptuous. The proper reception of the salvation won by the Son from the Father for human beings is gratitude, which leans towards Abelard's position. The notion that human suffering has salvific efficacy cannot be attributed directly to Anselm's theory; it is rather the expression of a confluence of cultural and monastic spiritualities which the church, although it may never have canonized them, did not condemn.

The spirituality of salvific participation in the suffering of Christ develops most fully in the late medieval period. In order to escape the extraction of justice by the wrathful Father, a believer hoped to become identified with the suffering, placating Son. A believer hoped to merge her or his own helpless suffering with that of the effective suffering of Christ. The conflation of suffering as satisfaction for sin and suffering as union with Christ merges into a conclusion that an individual's suffering is worth something in itself, that suffering is good in itself. Suffering became increasingly detached from the incarnation, ministry and resurrection of Jesus and became

something which in itself was salvific. Suffering placates God, it turns aside the wrath of God. Therefore, suffering *saves*, or worse, suffering *pleases* God.

In the minds of most Christians in this period, it is probable that the crucifixion of Christ as a technically efficacious point in a metaphysical theory (Anselm) was not differentiated from the crucifixion as the personal demonstration of the extent of Christ's love for the needy sinner (Abelard). Suffering was probably never seen as apostolic suffering in the cause of something greater than the personal salvation of the individual sinner, such as an earthly reign of God. Most of the interpretations of the meaning of Christ's crucifixion used the same images and phrases and must have looked very much of a piece.

The conflation and confusion of these two hermeneutical positions, the "objective" theory of Anselm and the "subjective" theory of Abelard, still contribute to the misunderstanding that arises in discussions of the meaning of Christ's crucifixion into the present day.

For further characterization of the quarrel and confusion between the "objective" and "subjective" positions on the efficacy of the crucifixion, the reader is referred to Appendix A: An Imaginary Dialogue in Illustration of the Objective and Subjective Positions on the Work of Christ. (page 118).

Chapter 3

The Modern/Postmodern Period: Salvation by Liberation or Rescue

The modern period begins in the shift of the locus of "sure knowledge" from what can be thought without self-contradiction, to what can be demonstrated to perform to a consistent measurement. The rise and dominance of positivist materialism begins with the collapse of Realist ontological dimensions in the wake of nominalist critique and the success of technological invention based in empirical research.

By the time the Peace of Westphalia had been signed, Descartes (1596-1650) had proposed a mechanical and atomistic material universe, and Isaac Newton (1642-1727) would shortly demonstrate that nature operated predictably according to inherent laws that could be described mathematically. Belief in the ability of science to predict the behavior of nature began to supercede belief in the willful providence of God. As the Enlightenment proceeded, Atonement theory increasingly came into conflict with the modern ethos, first its materialist Newtonian and Cartesian "metaphysics," and later on its Darwinism, which contradicted original sin by displacing Genesis creation theory with evolutionary theory.

During the 18th and 19th centuries, the national churches of the Reformation were disestablished, biblical authority was relativized by historical criticism, and the uncontested territory of religion was reduced to personal morality and interior feeling. The split between religious and scientific claims to ultimate truth, between faith and fact, "subjective" experience and "objective" proof, became a normal feature of the modern mindset.

Theologians who began to look for what salvation could mean in the modern, infinitely material universe focused on the ethical teaching and example of Christ rather than ontological speculation about what might have been accomplished by means of his death. In the history of salvation theory in the modern and postmodern period, retention of Atonement theory most often coincides with a position of conflict with modern and postmodern¹ paradigms, and a rejection of Atonement theory most often accompanies theological accommodation to them.

Three Interrelated Changes in World-View

The following three interrelated changes in world-view from the medieval to the modern period summarize the points of modernist thought that impinge on the development of soteriology away from Atonement theory, with postmodern extensions or contradictions:

1. The individual (thing or person) becomes the ultimate locus of reality. In the wake of the nominalist critique, the discrete, individual thing became the ultimate locus of reality, which supported the ascendancy of material positivism and atomic theory. Atomic theory contradicts the Realist idea of a universal humankind whose universal nature can be altered in single incidents such as a Fall and an Atonement. Concomitantly, the individual person, and that person's rights, became the primary constituent of the state (at least in theory).

As the postmodern era unfolds, atomic theories are being destabilized. In the wake of their decline, Gestalt, holistic and systems theories which consider temporal relationship the primary constitutive factor of reality are rising. An assumption of relationship as the locus of ultimate reality supports Liberal and Liberationist focus on salvation as just relations in society.

2. Ontology restricted to the study of causal relations. Cause and effect "metaphysic" undergirds the mechanical universe of modernity and its world-view characterized by objectivity, materialism, acceptance of Darwinist evolutionary theory and the belief in human progress, and conditions the development of historical reasoning which supports and influences critical studies of the Bible.

The 20th century discovery of relativity, indeterminacy and synchronicity at the subatomic level destabilizes causal presumption. Linguistic theories have "deconstructed" the presumption of scientific objectivity and neutrality, which contributes to the contemporary state of postmodern cosmological confusion. This confusion is contributing to the polarization of Christian soteriology between the salvific antipodes of rescue and remedy.

3. Secularization of culture. The separation of church and state in the modern era corresponded to the general acceptance of an individual's private and non-political intrapersonal life of intuition, sympathy and morality as the only defensible territory of religion. Politics and other human relationships were assumed to be subject to empirically discernible "laws" such as those postulated by the physical sciences. Economics, not religion, was considered to be the true physics of culture, and science and technology superceded God's providence as the locus of salvation.

Secularization can now be seen as a Northern European and North American cultural norm which has been relativized by proliferating political conflicts worldwide that involve religious differences, and the rise of social justice theologies that push the practice of Christianity out of the closet of personal morality and devotion and into the public and political theater.

I will organize my study of the Atonement theory in the modern era — from the Enlightenment through the mid-20th century — by viewing its position and development along three theological trajectories: a.) Confessional theology of mainline denominations; b.) Academic Liberal theology; and c.) Evangelical conversion praxis. Around the middle of the 20th century there is a breaking up of these patterns and an irruption of Christian critique, contextual theologizing and a pervasive turn toward prophetic witness throughout the Christian churches: d.) The turn to prophetic witness at mid-century.

Definition of Terms. "Liberal Protestantism" was that optimistic character of Reformed thought prior to World War I which believed that: faith should be adapted to current science and cosmology, personal morality and social ethics are the purposes of religion, God is perfecting an immature race more than redeeming a fallen one, the

Bible is fallible, and that concerned social action can bring about the kingdom of God in history. After the war, there was a reaction against Liberal belief in the progress of Christian civilization and a renewal of the "total depravity" theology of the original Reformers which is called "Neo-orthodoxy." However, Liberal ideas did not vanish. Mainline churches and theorists continue to work with issues of plurality of authority, cosmological accommodation, Biblical scholarship, and the ethical position of the church. "Neo-orthodoxy" and "Evangelical" are not synonymous. Neo-orthodoxy was a post-war dogmatic reassertion of Reformation theory. Evangelicalism is a consistently conservative spirituality of conversion experience with roots in the Christocentric piety of the late medieval period, which understood itself as a bulwark of true Christianity maintained against the rising apostatic tide of Liberalism and secular modernity. "Liberation" or "Liberationist" theology is to be sharply distinguished from Liberal theology on the basis of its constituency. Liberal theology was the belief system of middle class, paternalistic Northern European and North American social welfare advocates. Liberation theology incorporates Marxist critique of exploitive economic systems and seeks to support the self-liberation of oppressed groups of people everywhere, but is written primarily for the post-colonial cultures of the so-called "Third World," and the permanent underclasses of the so-called "First World."

Confessional Theology of Mainline Denominations

Nominalist critique, for those who accepted it, reduced the sources for Christian claims of objective authority to tradition and scripture. When the Reformers cut ties to the authority of tradition, then their base of authority was reduced to one source: scripture, or Revelation. Statements of belief were then called "confessions," based in a particular interpretation of scripture. Assent to its confessional statement quickly became the main criteria for membership in a denominational church, and a period of Protestant "scholasticism" made official religion in the late 17th and early 18th century a generally rather lukewarm affair. Exhaustion and disgust with the wars of religion, the increasing success of science, and the attractions of Renaissance humanism all contributed to the state of post-Reformation torpor in the confessional Protestant churches.

As noted in chapter two, Atonement theory was retained by all the European Protestant churches as a matter of orthodoxy in their constitutional confessions. These confessions were then subject to interpretation by relatively independent pastors and congregations, who were influenced by both academic theorists and popular evangelical revival movements. However, most interpreters conformed to the modifying and homogenizing process of their denominations' community reflection on these influences before conflict with the confession reached a point of confrontation. Through adaptation to the changing modern cultural ethos of their membership, over time the character of the mainline churches was generally stable until the rapid decline of membership after WWII in Europe and after about 1970 in the United States.

The Roman Catholic tradition is not a "denomination" in the sense of the Protestant denominations, but at the Council of Trent it ratified a creed (chapter two) that remained its dogmatic standard until the Second Vatican Council in the mid-1960's, which includes the relation of salvation to the merits of Christ's death. Catholic soteriological confidence was derived from trust in the Church as the historical extension of the reality of Christ and sacramental participation in its salvific presence. Preserving the Eucharistic formula of transubstantiation, Roman Catholicism ignored the nominalist reduction of metaphysical entities and officially adhered to a position of "semi-realism" rooted in the theological syntheses of Thomas Aquinas. Therefore, the Roman Catholic Church has been consistently more preoccupied with its sacramental and ecclesiastical tradition than with Atonement theory and Christological doctrines, and both Vatican I and Vatican II were focused on such ecclesiological issues.

Academic Liberal Theology

Most Liberal theologians were (and are) interested in establishing intellectual credibility for the ongoing project of reconciling Christian theology with current philosophy, social and psychological theory, historical criticism of scripture and physical science. They are the primary source for Christian critique and rejection of Atonement theory until the rise of contextual Liberation theologies in the mid-twentieth century.

Liberal Protestantism in Europe, responding to Enlightenment challenges to the authority of Christianity, attempted to reconcile Christianity with the "common sense" spirit of 18th century science and philosophy. The reframing of religion as a matter of interior feeling, conscience and intuition that should have a practical effect was most ably and influentially expounded by Emmanuel Kant and Friedrich Schleiermacher. Kant (1784-1804) re-centered Protestant theology from its medieval focus on metaphysical justification to the practical morality of ethics. The essence of religion is found in moral conscience, and the point of religion is to know and to do one's duty.

Schleiermacher (1768-1834), influenced by Pietism, found the essence of religion in experience, feeling and intuition. He rejected idealistic metaphysical speculation, moralism and the Atonement theory, and proposed that salvation is a matter of the interior growth of the person in an experience he called "God-consciousness."

Religion's essence is neither thinking nor acting, but intuition and feeling. It wishes to intuit the universe, wishes devoutly to overhear the universe's own manifestations and actions, longs to be grasped and filled by the universe's immediate influences in childlike passivity.²

Protestant Liberals accepted the primacy of feeling and intuition, Biblical criticism, ethical priority and the irrelevance of philosophical or metaphysical proofs, and melded it to the 19th century's confidence in the material and moral "evolutionary" progress of European civilization. They tended to find an ethical rather than apocalyptic or ontological message in the gospels. They believed that civilized human beings, guided by Western Protestant Christian insight, morality and sympathy, could bring about the kingdom of God on earth.

Ritschl: Kingdom Soteriology. The foremost theorist of Protestant Liberalism was Albrecht Ritschl (1822-1889), German Lutheran professor of theology. He controverted the theory of original sin, and rejected substitutionary Atonement, the Trinity and all metaphysical assertions as unbiblical and unprovable speculation. Ritschl thought that the reconciliation of Christ does not effect a change in the disposition of God nor does it change the ontological status of humans. The life of Jesus reveals God's loving will for humans. Christ came to establish the redeemed community on earth,

the kingdom of God, and his death was the result of his faithfulness to his vocation. The salvation revealed by Christ is the establishment of new relationships in the world. Justification, sanctification, redemption, forgiveness of sins and the establishment of the kingdom all happen congruently, and God effects these right relationships through the activity of the Holy Spirit.

The individual believer within the Christian community does not appropriate to himself the call to the kingdom of God and reconciliation or acceptance as a child of God without *simultaneously* experiencing these effects of grace as impulses for *corresponding* personal activity. . . . This agreement between these impulses and the purpose of God, and their similarity in different individuals, is grounded in and assured by the Holy Spirit in the community However, the Christian knowledge of God, springing as it does from definitive revelation, is *congruent* with God's knowledge of himself. Hence, seen from the divine point of view, the development of the Christian community (resulting from the exercise of love in accordance with knowledge of God) is a part of the divine self-revelation. From these considerations, it appears that the common spirit through which the members of the community receive their like knowledge of God and their like impulses toward the kingdom of God and toward sonship with God, is God's Holy Spirit.³ (*italics mine*)

The earthly Christian community is taken up into the divine life (sonship) by the action of the Holy Spirit in its relationships in time and space, a sort of imminent divinization or incarnation of God's life in the Christian community. This imminent divinization of the community simultaneously justifies, sanctifies and realizes it in social service: the Christian community = the reception of the Holy Spirit = the kingdom = the salvation revealed and begun by Christ. I stress Ritschl's "congruency" because the structure of congruency in itself contradicts the structure of the Atonement theory. The Atonement theory is consequential: *first* the fall, *then* the intervention of Christ, *then* the forgiveness of God.

Ritschl had many disciples who emphasized various aspects of his thought in their own work, sometimes to the point of obscuring it. Adolf Harnack (1851-1930) church historian and patristics scholar, believed that the gospel interiorly forms the individual who then contributes to the progress of Christian society; he strongly emphasized the humanistic individualism of modernity. Harnack denied any salvific efficacy in the death of Jesus and placed great

importance on the gospel revelation that God is a loving and lenient Father. The portrait of Jesus Christ painted by Harnack in *What Is Christianity?*⁴ makes visible Harnack's identification of Christ with the figure of an earnest, decent, attractive, eloquent, soulful, well-bred, unconflicted Prussian pastor and reveals the greatest weakness of Protestant Liberalism: its easy identification of the kingdom of God with 19th century white Northern European middle class culture.

Rauschenbusch: Social Gospel Soteriology. In the United States, Liberal Protestantism was taken up by Walter Rauschenbusch (1861-1918). Baptist pastor and professor of church history, he studied in Germany with the Ritschlian school, then took a stint as a pastor to a church in the Hell's Kitchen immigrant slum district of New York. In a series of lectures at Yale published in 1917 as *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, he characterizes the realization of Christian eschatological hope in terms of the potential for progress of Western civilization.

Rauschenbusch focuses on the life, ministry and message of Jesus as the locus for soteriological truth and reframes the meaning of Christ's crucifixion in a context of social confrontation and its consequences. He describes Jesus as a prophet who was killed by the six collective sins of civilization:

- 1) religious bigotry of ecclesiastical religion;
- 2) abuse of political power;
- 3) corruption of justice;
- 4) unprincipled mob action;
- 5) militarism; and
- 6) the racism of class contempt.

He clearly saw sin as concentrated in political domination: "We are on sure ground when we realize that the prophetic leadership of Jesus endangered the power of the ruling class."⁵

Rauschenbusch did not place his six structures of social sin within the framework of the creation/fall/justification-by-Atonement theory of salvation. He clearly describes the victory and satisfaction theories of the Atonement theory as cultural constructs that are "alien to the spirit of the gospel."⁶ In regards to The Penal Theory and covenantal federalism^{7a} he speculates, "Perhaps the commercial and governmental theories of late Protestantism were the natural social product of the age of capitalistic merchants and of limited monarchies."^{7b}

Rauschenbusch was horrified by World War I, but he wrote that the political position of Germany had been misunderstood, an opinion that was not well-received and contributed to the decline of Liberal credibility. However, Rauschenbusch defined a platform for the late 20th century understanding of sin as corporate structure that continues to influence the discourse of prophetic Christian theology.⁸

Liberalism's program of accommodation to contemporary culture and world view continued to attract followers in mainline denominations. In 1936, an American, Henry P. Van Dusen wrote down five major presumptions of Liberal theology:

- 1) Devotion to truth;
- 2) Deference to science and to scientific method;
- 3) Tentativeness . . . as to the possibility of metaphysical certainty;
- 4) Emphasis upon the principle of continuity between revelation and natural religion between Christianity and other religions; and
- 5) A spirit of confidence in human reason.⁹

There is no position taken on Atonement, justification or salvation; presumably '3) Tentativeness . . .' refers to a standard of a lack of definition on soteriological theory.

Liberalism tended to deny the doctrine of original sin. In Liberal anthropology, human beings are not intrinsically depraved or evil, rather they are shaped by natural and social forces which can be corrected. Their behavior should be reformed, rather than punished or damned. Liberalism accommodated psychological and social theories of personal and social development, and interpreted evolutionary theory as proof of inevitable progress for the human species.

Protestant Neo-Orthodoxy: Return to Sin and Atonement.

After World War I, there was a backlash reaction to Liberal Protestantism in Europe, since so many of the Liberals had identified 19th century ideas of the progress of Western civilization with the kingdom of God, against which the carnage and corruption of "The Great War" levied devastating reproof. Swiss Reformed clergyman and systematic theologian Karl Barth (1886-1968) blasted the idea of Christian progress and Liberal idealistic immanentism. He stressed the separation between Creator and creature, the majestic otherness of God, the total depravity and sinfulness of human beings and their utter dependence on the Atoning work and revelation of Christ for

salvation. There can be no truth in a theology based on inward experience, social progress, idealist speculation or the "footprints of God in nature." The Revelation of the scriptures is all we know of the existence and the will of God. Barth's stance was a hard, solid return to the creation/fall/redemption theology of his Calvinist background, and reasserted the necessity of the Atonement.

In the United States, there had always been Evangelical resistance to Liberal accommodation to modernity; it had strongly stated its case before the opening of the European wars in many conservative Bible Conferences and in *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to Truth*, published in 1905-1910 (see below). Academic theological backlash to modernity and the Liberal platform was framed in the United States by Reinhold and H. Richard Niebuhr, who updated the concept of original sin with categories derived from social science and modern existential psychology. Some Presbyterian theologians continue to explore the relevance of Atonement theory through nuancing of language concepts taken from crucifixion imagery and melded to contemporary subjective discourse, such as the efficacy of empathy and the suffering of God.

Neo-orthodoxy's method of theological acknowledgment of the presence of radical evil in modern society fell into the background as the century advanced, mostly because it was superceded by a proliferation of new ideas and solutions to the problems of the human predicament. Philosophers and theologians began to explore other anthropological and cosmological theories, models of universe, deity and humanity that would transcend the split between religion and science such as Existentialism and Process Thought. Neither existential nor process theology need be considered in this study, since neither one of these philosophically-based theologies has proposed a creation/fall/redemption type of anthropology, a coherent Christology, or a cosmology wherein the elements of Atonement theory can be said to exist at all.

Evangelical Conversion Praxis

Atonement theory is embedded in an experience of conversion which is the basis for the praxis of Protestant churches including but not limited to: Pietist, Puritan, Evangelical, Baptist, Methodist, Fundamentalist and Pentecostal. Most of the churches share a

common ground of revival style preaching, emotionally stirring vernacular hymnody, personal faith witness, small group Bible study, foreign and internal missions, restoration politics and strict moral standards of sanctification or holiness for members.

Evangelical dissenters to Protestant churches of the Reformation period appeared almost immediately following the breach with the Roman Catholic communion. Before the Peace of Westphalia was signed, Pietists in Germany and Puritans in England were meeting in small Bible study groups to find and practice a "religion of the heart."

Just as lay people in the medieval period wanted an active and heartfelt spirituality and so turned to identification with the human suffering of the crucifixion and works of charity and mortification, Evangelicals searched the scriptures in a quest for the interior certainty of a deeply felt "assurance" experience of an individual, personal loving relationship with God in Christ. In John Wesley's *Twenty-Five Articles of Religion*, adopted by the Methodist Conference in Baltimore in 1784, there is this description of religious experience both evidence and conviction of faith:

2. Taking the word in a more particular sense, faith is a divine evidence and conviction, not only that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself," but also that Christ loved me, and gave himself for me. It is by this faith . . . that we receive Christ; that we receive him in all his offices, as our Prophet, Priest, and King. It is by this that he is "made of God unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."¹⁰

Evangelicals may be found within mainline denominations, or may splinter from them, or be regional, independent, store-front or tent-meeting churches. They are defined more by their distinctive spirituality of conversion experience, characteristic scriptural exegesis, charismatic preaching and emphasis on holiness (morality) of life than by dogma or creed.

The Conversion Narrative. The Eastern United States was settled by immigrants who were primarily members of dissenting English and Northern European Protestant churches, such as Puritans, Baptists, Congregationalists, and Quakers. Pietistic and evangelical Protestantism, which finds authority in individual spiritual experience and conscience in conformity with scripture, is still the cultural norm for most Christians in the United States today.

The place of Atonement theory in this spirituality is foundational, but it is no longer the metaphysical Atonement theory of Anselm nor that of the Reformers of the 16th century. Justification of the original sin of Adam has changed to justification of the actual personal sins of the individual believer. That salvation from individual personal sins was effected through the suffering and death of Christ is firmly and aggressively asserted, but nowhere systematically explained. The pointed phrase, "Jesus died for *you*," has become embedded in an "oft told story" process of conversion which is its only and entire explanation and purpose.¹¹ Relation of the experience usually conforms to the following narrative sequence:

1. Growing awareness of a ground note of insecurity or intense anxiety, perhaps precipitated by a life crisis of some kind; the beginning of a sense of sin. Search for a solution.
2. Contact with the Word of God, through reading (or electronic media), witness of a family member or acquaintance, childhood memory, church advertisement, voice of conscience.
3. Conviction of seriousness and pervasiveness of personal and worldly sin. Guilt and sorrow for personal sin, and intense fear of damnation.
4. Struggle with forces of sin and the devil for one's loyalty, during which the person comes to a feeling of complete helplessness.
5. Surrender of self to Christ, or "decision for Christ," accompanied by an intense feeling of personal acceptance by Saviour, an assurance of salvation. Intense feeling of gratitude.
6. Baptism, membership in community, shouldering of witness and holiness duties, conversion of life to the moral values and practices of the community in which the conversion has taken place.

This intervention conversion pattern resembles the personal conversion experiences related by Augustine of Hippo, Martin Luther and John Bunyan. Its dependence on guilt for personal sin cannot be overstated. This tradition is the origin of the Evangelical preaching style described as "Bible pounding" and "hellfire and damnation." Evangelicals transpose the metaphysical theory of creation/fall/justification to a personal experiential process of crisis/intervention/holiness. This conversion process undergone by the individual is considered to be salvific in itself.¹²

This intervention, or revival, pattern was disputed by Congregational minister and theologian Horace Bushnell, who wrote about Christian nurturance in the home and family life, advocating that growth and development were the best ways to form new members in the Church.¹³ Nevertheless, among most Evangelical groups in the United States, children reared in Evangelical families are still expected to narrate an experience of being "saved," of being converted to saving faith in the work of Christ according to the pattern above.

Atonement: One of "Five Fundamentals." Fundamentalism is not a confessionally constituted Protestant church so much as a general platform or movement preached by Evangelical ministers from many denominations since the late 1800s. It is concerned with restoration to the fundamentals of Christian faith that were felt to be compromised by modernity. Early Bible conferences in the United States, particularly at Niagara in 1878, agreed to sets of resolutions and confessions, such as "The Niagara Creed" of "14 Fundamentals." The General Assembly of the Northern Presbyterian Church in 1910 listed "five fundamentals" very similar to those published by the Stewart brothers.¹⁴

The collection of articles entitled *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to Truth*, published in Los Angeles between 1905 and 1910 by businessmen Lyman and Milton Stewart, have since found widespread acceptance as the "dogmatic" for independent revivalist churches. From this corporate exposition on the fundamentals of Christian faith, the five fundamentals are commonly deduced to be:

- 1) Inerrancy of Scripture;
- 2) Divinity of Jesus;
- 3) Virgin birth;
- 4) Substitutionary death of Christ for sins, or Atonement; and
- 5) Resurrection and the Second Coming.¹⁵

The Five Fundamentals are not systematically related to each other in a framework of a comprehensive anthropology and reconciled with a coherent cosmology. In my opinion, they function as a boundary around the society of those saved through the conversion narrative. The Atonement theory has become a defensive article of belief to be asserted against the seemingly atheistic culture

of Liberal Protestantism which has accepted evolutionary theory, historical criticism of the Bible, and the plurality of truth claims from other religions and extra-Biblical sources.¹⁶

Pentecostal Circles: Faith Healing and Atonement. Some of the Pentecostal churches claimed an additional benefit of the Atonement: the healing of the physical body as well as the spiritual soul through the action of the Holy Spirit during a laying on of hands as part their services. Physical healing is an interesting extension of the salvific claims for the work of the Atoning death of Christ, since it does not fit into either the Anselmic formula nor the Penal Theory. Such healing is actually closer to the Roman Catholic theory of sacramental grace: that the merits amassed by Christ and the Saints can be distributed as grace through the Sacraments of the Church, and that one of these sacraments is Anointing with oil for the spiritual strengthening of one who is sick.

This is an example of how the word "Atonement" has often been retained and used for a wide variety of beliefs and practices, or spiritualities, that may or may not conform to a particular orthodox doctrine or confessional platform.

Roman Catholic Salvific Suffering: The Sacred Heart. Roman Catholics also developed a "religion of the heart." A theory of the suffering and death of Christ during the crucifixion and its salvific relation to sin was manifest in a kind of spirituality known as devotion to the Sacred Heart. Here the suffering of the heart of Christ was seen as the pain of God over the sin and suffering of the devotee. When the individual sinner realizes that she or he has caused an infinitely loving Jesus to suffer, and sees the suffering in the sacred heart for human sin, a sympathetic response is generated that pushes the devotee to contrition and conversion of life. This is similar both to Abelard's moral influence theory and to the conversion spirituality of Protestant revival spirituality. Union with Christ was the ultimate intention of this spirituality, but at times the suffering of the believer was reduced to being a good thing in itself, and "offering one's pain up to God" was seen as a response superior to pragmatic remedy. Women in particular have had difficulty in distinguishing unitive spiritual experiences from being victimized in abusive situations, and this problem will be treated at greater length in chapter four below.

Prophetic Witness After World War II: Sense of World Crisis

As noted earlier, a paradigm shift from modern to postmodern emerges around mid-20th century that has had an impact on Christian salvation theories. In the term "prophetic witness," I include Evangelical, Liberal and Catholic soteriological positions. I will demonstrate how all positions respond to the same culturally pervasive sense of world crisis, although they array themselves between two different solutions, or salvations, which I will call respectively "Rescue" and "Liberation."

Liberation has already been defined at the beginning of this chapter as prophetic witness against sinful social structures. I take the term "Rescue" from Catharine Albanese's discussion of the growth of "dispensational premillennialism," or "Second Coming" and "Rapture" spiritualities, and the attraction of millenarian beliefs:

Along with literal belief in the Bible and a strong separatist tendency, premillennialism points to a religion of cultural contraction among contemporary Protestant conservatives. . . . their contraction is an expression . . . of habit of mind and response to complexity in late-twentieth-century life. Implicit in the response of the dispensational message is the idea that the world is growing worse and that human beings cannot by themselves undo the damage and right the situation. Instead, the series of predicted end-time events tells of strong conviction of a need to be rescued, to snatched away from an untenable situation by a divine and extraordinary power.¹⁷

In Rescue soteriology, focus on the intervention of the Atonement accomplished by Christ in the crucifixion has shifted to focus on the future intervention of the Second Coming of Christ and the establishment of the millenium: it is apocalyptically prophetic.

Cultural Factors Connoting World Crisis. Several factors support a general shift toward prophetic and apocalyptic formulations of Christian soteriological theory at mid-century:

1. Sense of urgency caused by the events of the Holocaust, the Bomb, the Cold War; escalating conflict in post-colonial nations; cultural pluralism and an increasing perception of pervasive economic and environmental crisis.

2. General atmosphere of critique and re-evaluation of all cultural and religious assumptions initiated by the counter-cultural movements of the 60s and 70s in the industrialized countries.

3. Recognition of interdependent economic, political, religious and biological systems as the forces underlying human history, greatly due to the pervasive influence of Marxian critique of economics and power.

4. Loss of membership from mainline churches as they are increasingly perceived to be spiritually, morally and intellectually irrelevant and indifferent to the turmoil of the culture.

5. Locus of Roman Catholic authority splits from its base in Eurocentric College of Cardinals to a world community of regional Bishops, who have moved to redefine salvation in light of the pressing need for economic and political liberation of their poor and exploited constituents after the thawing of the Tridentine dogmatic and liturgical glacier at Vatican II. Escalating tension between loci of authority.

6. Rise of the ecumenical movement and acknowledgment of global inter-dependence, increasing cultural pluralism in the organization of the United Nations and the World Council of Churches, influenced by mission experience of unity in ministry despite differences in dogma.

7. Continuing erosion of certainty in the philosophical/ linguistic and physics/cosmology disciplines, which presses either towards a reformulation of all traditional authority structures, or to a retreat from ambiguity into absolutes and "fundamentals."

8. Rise of the "New-Age" syntheses in the atmosphere of openness to inter-religious dialog of Western culture with non-Christian religions particularly Buddhism, Hinduism, and native American tribal religions; and the influence of writers such as Carl Jung and Joseph Campbell towards the popularization of syncretic mythologies.

9. De-stabilization of mono-axial presumption, or that the truth about reality can be reduced to one cause, or one moment, principle, or individual thing.

10. Chiliastic apprehension regarding the approaching millenium, the year 2000 CE.

This web of inter-dependent factors and the sense of crisis affects the character of soteriological theory in the Evangelical churches, the Roman Catholic tradition, and academic theory and Liberation theology.

Contemporary Rescue Soteriologies: Roots in Atonement Theory. Evangelical, Fundamentalist, Pentecostal and Holiness revival/conversion churches claim much growth in worldwide membership since the 1970's. Evangelical praxis has been fairly consistent in its program since its beginnings in the 17th century, but the main factor contributing to contemporary growth seems to be the offer of a clear, simple, absolute solution to the present confusion and plurality of conflicts and crises: the Second Coming.

Millenarian soteriology upholds the Atonement theory's focus on sin and placation of divine wrath and punishment by the intervention of a loving Savior, who will return in Glory to judge the world and initiate the Millenium. Millenarian salvation is imaged as rescue. Jesus Christ personally adopts the saved person into an elect group who will be rescued from the tribulations of the endtimes and the punishment and annihilation prepared for reprobates and non-believers. But this punishment is not an abstract, metaphysical "absence of God" or "separation from the Good" in an otherworldly type of hell. The "tribulation" from which the millenarian hopes to be saved is like a nuclear holocaust: an Armageddon or Apocalypse which will end life as we know it and which is expected to occur sometime soon. Further, the elect will be saved not only from tribulation, but into the Reign of God, the Millenium, a thousand years of peace and prosperity established only for the saved, which will be an earthly, palpably fulfilling paradise. Millenarians expect to be united with family and friends in a perfected form of the cultural lifestyle to which they have become (or would like to become) accustomed.

Millenarians regard the suffering and death of Jesus as payment for sin and placation of divine wrath. However, justification in this culture tends to have a character of vindication of personal lifestyle rather than cosmic reorientation. In medieval times there were plenty of wars and plagues from which to hope for rescue, but the medieval Christian did not expect the perfection of "the world, the flesh and the devil." Medieval salvation was imaged in other-worldly terms, such as the realms of hell, purgatory and heaven depicted in Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*. The postmodern Christian expects that the Millenium will happen right here on "a new heaven and a new earth," after which something else more abstract may occur, but the focus is on the thousand year period during which the righteous will

enjoy a perfect world with each other while sinners are punished. Millenarians believe strongly in supernatural events, but since the collapse of the ontological dimension, supernatural events do not occur in another dimension such as eternity, rather they will occur right here in the dimension of time and space. Therefore, salvation theory is oriented to the present and immediate future/end of the natural world, not deferred to an ontologically disparate state.

Future Evangelical Outreach: De-emphasizing Atonement?

There is a development in Evangelical apologetics and outreach that may substantially affect the status of Atonement theory. The postmodern Evangelical community has identified its greatest contemporary religious rival as the New Age movement (formerly it was Liberal Protestantism), and has begun to train its ministers in outreach to this group.¹⁸

One of the biggest obstacles in the secular world to participating in revival-style conversion experience is the loss of a sense of sin. When people shrug their shoulders and walk away from "hellfire and damnation" preaching, they are unlikely to engage the evangelical conversion narrative and go on to accept Christ as a personal savior from personal sin. In contrast to the Evangelical sense of being helpless in an evil world spinning out of control from which they expect to be rescued only by extraordinary divine intervention, New Agers tend to believe that the ordinary chaos and cacaphony of the world is not a problem. The real universe is even bigger, better, louder and wilder, and not only are humans participants in it, they are creators and co-creators of it:

Individually and collectively, we create the realities we experience. This is the essence of "karma". Our beliefs, positive or negative, limiting or affirming, create reality.¹⁹

In our time of present uncertainties and future shocks, when our -ologies and -isms no longer seem to fit our experience very well, a good many people are searching. Ironically, the very same civilization that has created our turmoils and unrests has also set up the conditions for the New Age to arise. Researchers, using the best of science, have followed their data trails to uncover and begin to map the spiritual nature of human beings and the incredible aliveness of All That Is. . . . This unique creative fusion promises to give us a clearer and more exciting idea of the real nature of physical and spiritual life than we have ever had before.²⁰

All human beings are involved in the process of evolving spiritually, whether we presently recognize and accept this fact or not. The fact of this evolution is inevitable and inescapable, but how hard or easy the process will be is, to a large degree, in our own hands. . . .²¹

It will be interesting to compare how Evangelical theology shifts in the postmodern age, as it defines itself against New Age philosophy, with how apologists and bishops in the patristic age shifted their theology, as they defined Christianity against Gnosticism.

Contemporary Roman Catholic Soteriology: No Statement About Atonement. At Vatican II the primacy of the church as the salvific body of Christ in time was reasserted. However, there is a "silent" statement of universal salvation hidden in a lack of definition of any impediment to salvation, and a clear statement that there is salvation outside the Church. In its conciliar document, the *Constitution of the Church*, the Roman Catholic Church states that all people are called to salvation by God:

All men are called to be part of this catholic unity of the People of God, a unity which is harbinger of the universal peace it promotes. And there belong to it or are related to it in various ways, the Catholic faithful as well as all who believe in Christ, and indeed the whole of mankind.²²

This salvation is first of all extended to members of the Roman Catholic church proper; then to catechumens who are moved by the Holy Spirit to intend to join; then to anyone who is a baptized Christian of any stripe and believes in the Father Almighty and Christ; then to those who have not yet received the gospel, such as the family of origin of Jesus, the Jewish people. "But the plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator,"²³ such as Moslems. Anyone is saved who seeks to know God and listen to the dictates of conscience. Finally, the Holy Spirit is at work through the Church everywhere in the world among all persons who ever have or ever will live.

Through her work, whatever good is in the minds and hearts of men, whatever good lies latent in the religious practices and cultures of diverse peoples, is not only saved from destruction but is also healed, ennobled, and perfected unto the glory of God, the confusion of the devil, and the happiness of man.²⁴

There is no mention of Atonement theory, placation of the wrath of God, or payment for sin. Salvation is described as mediated through the Church of Christ, but the Church is constituted by the People of God through the action of the Holy Spirit. Membership in the People of God appears to be defined as available to all persons. Christ was sent by the Father to bring good news to the poor, to heal the contrite, to seek and to save the lost, to expiate the sins of the people (not the sin of Adam), and from the Resurrection the church is "given strength to overcome patiently and lovingly the afflictions and hardships which assail her from within and without, and to show forth in the world the mystery of the Lord . . ." ²⁵

The word "atonement" is not found in the index to the *Catechism of the Roman Catholic Church*, published by the Vatican in 1994.²⁶ The *Catechism* does not present a philosophically based, systematic explanation of salvation. In its chapter on "Christ's Redemptive Death in God's Plan of Salvation," the character or summary of what Catholics can hope for in the salvation of the Church is presented through citations from the Gospels, the Hebrew Bible, the Creeds of the Church, the documents of Trent, and various other treasures from its tradition. Many of the metaphors cited earlier in this study, such as ransom, sacrifice, redemption, the suffering servant, atonement and satisfaction, are used and combined, but nowhere comprehensively related to one another or defined in contemporary terms. It would appear from the method of the exposition of this catechism, if not from its argument, that the Church believes salvation is to be known through participation in the tradition of the Church. To inherit and appropriate the treasures of the historical and mystical church is to be saved into the love of God for human beings as revealed and preserved in the Church. This would be consistent with the direction of its self-formulation established in the councils of Vatican I and II. In my opinion, the *Catechism* neither clearly supports nor clearly contradicts any position in the ongoing argument about Atonement theory as presented in this thesis.

Liberation Theologies: Atonement Theory Rejected.

Liberation theologians reformulate salvation theory to support the struggle for social justice. Salvation is reconstituted as a this-world affair, a God-with-us affair. Most of the major denominations now have Liberation as well as Evangelical dimensions.

Apparently, for Liberation theology, ultimate reality is now located in politics. The Marxist critique of power and economics and the dialectical process of socio/economic theory becomes the "metaphysical" system undergirding interpretation of the Gospel message. However, like the Fundamentalist narrative process, Liberation theology is not yet fully or systematically reconciled to Christian doctrine and current cosmology.

Liberationists tend to view the crucifixion as the result of conflict with unjust authorities, and claim the death of Christ occurred in solidarity with all humans who struggle for justice among the poor, marginalized and disenfranchised people of the world. The suffering and death of Jesus is not a placation of divine wrath nor payment for sin; rather it is a sign of God's presence in the midst of sin, and God is present to, and has a preference for, those who suffer injustice and struggle for liberation.

"Justice" is not satisfaction nor expiation extracted from an individual for wrongdoing with the subsequent restoration of the transgressor to righteousness. Justice is empowerment of community members to change their situation. Justice is not the judgment of God and subsequent punishment of sinners, but the establishment of the kingdom of God in the real world, which involves a change of circumstances for oppressed people. Like the Apocalyptic salvation-in-time of the Millenarians, Liberation theologies conceive of salvation as occurring here and now in time and space. But unlike the Millenarian intervention, Jesus will not arrive at a certain point in time to rescue believers, fix creation for the good people, and punish the sinful people responsible for its corruption; rather, the presence of God will empower communities of powerless people to resist and overcome corrupt and sinful social structures.

African American Liberation theologian James Cone bases his theology in the Black encounter with the life and ministry of Christ in the Gospels. While he denounces the racism practiced among

members of the church throughout history, he nevertheless claims the authority of Christian revelation for Black liberation. Cone criticizes Anselm's theory on the basis that it is "A neat rational theory but useless as a leverage against political oppression. It dehistoricizes the work of Christ, separating it from God's liberating act in history."²⁷ He criticizes Abelard's theory for failing to grasp the extent and power of social evil by limiting his theater of salvation to the interior process of individual reflection. He states that all forms of patristic and medieval soteriological theories divorce reconciliation and redemption from history. Cone finds the core of salvation to be deliverance from evil, in history, as the Israelites were delivered from slavery in Egypt.

The Incarnation is the salvific presence of God in the concrete, historical lives of uprooted and enslaved people, people who have no other reference for identity, which gives them the strength to endure suffering and survive to fight for their humanity. . . .

When everything else in their experience said that they were nobodies, Jesus entered their experience as a friend and a helper of the weak and helpless. His presence in the black experience was the decisive liberating event which bestowed dignity upon them. His presence enabled blacks to believe that they were on the "Lord's journey" despite the historical evidence that said otherwise.²⁸

Enslaved, "colored," poor people, who are worthless in the eyes of mainstream society, are the preferred companions of Christ. The knowledge of their value in the eyes of God empowered them to reject their degradation, to re-imagine their value in society and to struggle ceaselessly for its realization.

. . . Jesus' presence in the experience of suffering liberated black people from being dependent upon the historical limitation of servitude for a definition of their humanity. Thus they began to project this new knowledge of themselves with future, apocalyptic imagination. They began to sing and preach about a "home in glory" where they would "sit at the welcome table." Heaven thus was not so much an opiate as it was a revolutionary judgment that black people made about American society on the basis of Jesus' presence in their lives. . . . It was this vision that enabled black preachers from Henry Highland Garnet to Martin Luther King, Jr., to struggle for freedom in the social context of oppression.²⁹

Cone affirms that God is loving, and this truth in itself demolishes white Western Christian theology, since no one who oppresses others can claim to define what love is. Cone means to seize the living truth of Christianity from oppressors who have unwittingly preserved the liberation of their captives in a religious inheritance they never truly understood but mistakenly used to support their complacency as oppressors. The suffering and death of Christ at the hands of oppressive authorities proves the solidarity of Christ with all those who are likewise oppressed.

Latin American Liberation theology, written by theologians in South and Central America for indigenous and post-colonial working class populations, is perhaps the best known of the Liberation theories. Jon Sobrino's Christology is most articulate concerning the meaning of the crucifixion:

So now we see that the cross of Jesus cannot be properly understood and appreciated unless we view it in terms of Jesus' whole life. His life is a journey that leads to the cross . . . The cross is not the result of some divine decision independent of history; it is the outcome of the basic option for incarnation in a given situation. That entails conflict because sin holds power in history and takes the triumphant form of religious and political oppression. Jesus had to choose between evading all that or facing up to it squarely. He chose the latter course, challenging the idolatrous use of power to oppress people and the idolatrous conception of God that justified such use.³⁰

Sobrino is addressing a double issue: both the economic oppression of government and religious collusion with that oppression which has used Atonement-like ideas of the holiness of suffering to persuade an entire class of people to accept their subjugation. On the issue of the spirituality of identification with the suffering of Christ he writes:

If the cross is the consequence of a fundamental attitude on Jesus's part, then Christian spirituality of the cross cannot simply concentrate on the doleful aspects of human existence. Spirituality on the cross does not mean merely the acceptance of sadness, pain, and sorrow; it does not mean simply passivity and resignation. . . . The cross is the most peculiar and distinctive feature of Christian faith, but Christian spirituality is not formally a spirituality of suffering; rather it is a spirituality focused on the following of Jesus.³¹

Sobrinho's spirituality of the cross is not a theory of the soteriological efficacy of Christ's suffering and death; it is a theology of following Christ into his confrontation with the condition of oppression and the consequences of engaging oppression in open conflict. A Liberation study of the crucifixion does not explain how salvation has occurred, such as an Atonement theory, but rather invites all humans to participate in salvation history by following the example of God in solidarity with human beings through the incarnation, teaching and ministry, crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This path is "an open road that moves history forward, opens up a future, and nurtures a hope in spite of sin and historical injustice."³² The life and death of Jesus reveals that salvation occurs in history, not in another dimension of reality, and shows humans the way to live out the salvation plan of God. The Atonement theory of payment for sin, or placating the wrath of God, has no place in Liberation theology.

Other Liberation Theology movements worldwide include: the Polish Solidarity movement, Minjung theology in Korea, gay and lesbian liberation such as that in Dignity, and Womanist and Feminist liberation theologies. Feminist theology and its critique of Atonement theory is the subject of the next chapter.

World Council of Churches: God's Work in History. At the fifth assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1975 at Nairobi, a statement on the mission of the universal church was drafted that images salvation as liberation in history; it makes no reference to Atonement theory nor makes any attempt to reconcile Atonement theory with other theories of justification or doctrines of the work of Christ.

57. The gospel is good news from God, our Creator and Redeemer. On its way from Jerusalem to Galilee and to the ends of the earth, the Spirit discloses ever new aspects and dimensions of God's decisive revelation in Jesus Christ. The gospel always includes: the announcement of God's Kingdom and love through Jesus Christ, the offer of grace and forgiveness of sins, the invitation to repentance and faith in him, the summons to fellowship in God's Church, the command to witness to God's saving words and deeds, the responsibility to participate the struggle for justice and human dignity, the obligation to denounce all that hinders human wholeness, and a commitment to risk life itself. In our time, to the

oppressed the gospel may be new as a message of courage to persevere in the struggle for liberation in this world as a sign of hope for God's inbreaking Kingdom. To women the gospel may bring news of a Christ who empowered women to be bold in the midst of cultural expectations of submissiveness. To children the gospel may be a call of love for the "little ones" and to the rich and powerful it may reveal the responsibility to share the poverty of the poor.³³

This statement is strongly theocentric, calling the life of Jesus Christ a revelation of God's intentions toward humans and calling for witness to the saving deeds and words of God. This is a clear position away from former attempts to reach a consensus on a formulation of the atoning work of Jesus Christ, his payment for sin, or his placation of the Father. There is no specific mention of the death of Christ at all.

Summary

Since the Enlightenment, the Western world has continually experienced secular contradiction of traditional religious authorities, in the face of which some Protestant Christians adopted Liberal platforms of accommodation and others adopted Evangelical and Fundamentalist platforms of resistance. Speaking in broad generalities, the accommodaters tended to reformulate salvation in terms of the changing intellectual fashions of science and to construct theologies that required extra-religious education to understand and implement; the resisters retained the creation/fall/redemption-by-Atonement theology of salvation by justification, and held to a Biblical-proof-text spirituality that "preached." The Roman Catholic tradition has consistently responded to the fracturing of secular authorities by reaffirming its ecclesiology of the church as the primary locus for salvation.

Driven by increasing postmodern destabilization of authority in all areas of society, revival/conversion Christianity continued to move to a more fortified resistance position, and to more strongly state its program of adherence to the five fundamentals, millennial expectation, and a restorative, separatist political platform. Atonement theory is embedded in this fortress position, but now as rebar in the wall of sectarian boundary and no longer as part of a

metaphysical system meant to reconcile transcendent truths with cultural norms, as its originators intended in the early medieval period.

At the close of this chapter on the modern/postmodern period, it seems that Christianity has grown out of the denominational, confessional and dogmatic identities of the 17th century and become spread over a spectrum of soteriological theories. At one pole, fundamentalist millenarianism awaits the rescue intervention of the second coming; and at another, Liberation Christians and "post-Christians" seek for a prophetically liberating, pluralistic and ecologically aware remedial praxis for confronting world crisis. Fundamentalists hope for sudden, dramatic, absolute rescue intervention in a world plummeting into chaos; Liberationists hope for the growth of economic, social and ecological justice in a still redeemable world. They disagree on how salvation shall come about, but they all agree: that the world has arrived at a state of crisis from which it needs to be saved; that modern people no longer expect to be saved from demonic captivity by ransom, nor from mortality by divinization, nor from the wrath of God by justification. People need to be saved from themselves and each other, by the intervention of God in history, either apocalyptically in a Millennium, or instrumentally through empowerment of ministry.

Richard Tarnas points out that the Northern European cause-and-effect presumption of concrete reality was set in a teleological direction of progress by the influence of Christian eschatological hopes configured in symbols and doctrines such as the End Times, the Resurrection, Heaven, restoration, perfection and divinization. He supports my observation that in the modern period, after the razoring of glory by nominalism, the theater of salvation shifts from an "other worldly" transcendent ontological dimension to this world in time and space, the world of human history.

Even in the course of Christianity's own development of the end time expectation, the waiting and hoping for divine action to initiate the world's transfiguration had gradually shifted during the early modern period to a sense that man's own activity and initiative were required to prepare for a Christian social utopia appropriate to the Second Coming. In the Renaissance, Erasmus had suggested a new understanding of Christian eschatology whereby humanity might move toward perfection in this world, with history realizing its goal

of the Kingdom of God in a peaceful earthly society — not through apocalypse, divine intervention, and otherworldly escape, but through a divine immanence working within man's historical evolution.³⁴

Both "seculars" and Christians do appear to be reaching a convergence about what human beings need to be saved from: the human destruction of the world. Whether that is envisioned as an Apocalypse, a Nuclear Holocaust, a Totalitarian State, or an Environmental Collapse, all of these apparitions of annihilation have one thing in common: they were produced by human beings. We need to be saved, in history, from each other. Those theologians who are investing their salvation hope in ministry are looking at the life and ministry of Jesus for a contemporary Christian soteriology.

Since the reality of this theory of imminent salvation is located entirely in the material and temporal world, it precludes a true metaphysical Atonement theory of the death of Christ. The residual form in which Atonement theory is retained in Fundamentalist and Evangelical revival/conversion praxis appears to be part of a platform of doomsday separatist identity politics, and not as a viable doctrine in a comprehensive theology for an inclusive and hopeful future society.

Overview of the History of Atonement Theory

The Patristic Period. Salvation is attributed primarily to God's presence in Jesus, or the Incarnation. Human nature needs to be saved from death and demonic powers, and from creaturely imperfection into divine perfection and immortality. Union with God through the incarnation of God in Christ results in some form of divinization or glorification of mortal humans into the immortal life of God. Human nature must be changed. Christ's suffering and death during the crucifixion is understood to prove the reality of the incarnation of God in human being.

The Medieval Period. Salvation is primarily attributed to the crucifixion death of Jesus on the cross as an Atonement for sin made by Christ on behalf of humankind. Christ's substitution in the place of humanity results in the justification of the sinner. Sinful human beings need to be saved from God's wrath and judgment; God's disposition towards humans must be changed. Justification saves the sinner from damnation by God. Christ's suffering and death during the crucifixion were thought to either have placated the wrath of God against sinful humans so that they would not have to be destroyed, or to have absorbed the punishment for sin that was due to humans. Suffering comes to be perceived as salvific in itself.

The Modern and Postmodern Period. Salvation is primarily attributed to the teaching and example of Jesus, who was and is the supreme moral and ethical exemplar. God is not changed, but revealed by the life, teaching, death and resurrection of Jesus. Human beings need to be saved from each other, in this world, from the mistakes of sinful human beings in history. Society must change. Salvation will come in the form of the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth, in time and space, a result of right relations between self, society and God. Some Christians image the establishment of the kingdom of God as rescue or intervention by God. Many Christians image the establishment of the kingdom of God as God's empowerment of ministry and remedy. In Liberation theology, the gospels demonstrate God's enduring regard for and solidarity with poor and oppressed people. Suffering is a point of identity between oppressed people and God: a sign that injustice is present and that God is with those who suffer from it.

Chapter 4

The Feminist Critique of Atonement Theory

Introduction to Feminist Theology in the United States.

Feminist theology has only become an academic department and publishing category in the last twenty years, but Feminist theological reflection has many foremothers in American history. The emancipation of women in the United States has never been a project isolated from the goals and ideals of American civil and religious liberty. The ideas and realization of civil liberty cannot be separated from those of religion. Owen Chadwick has pointed out that the legislation of toleration in England and Europe that ended the Reformation wars of religion, whereby plural religious authorities were tolerated by the state, was the beginning of the legitimacy of civil dissent.¹

Women's religious experience has often pushed them to contradict religious and civil authorities, for which tolerance has been initially unforthcoming. One of the earliest religious and civil dissenters in American history was Anne Hutchinson (1591-1643).

A member of the dissenting Puritan church in England, she migrated to North America and joined the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1634, where she began to hold religious meetings in her home. At first attended by a few women friends, the quality of her theological gifts were soon recognized and the meetings grew larger, to include 60 to 80 people. Her primary theological message appears to have been that a person can have direct personal experience of the divine presence unmediated by scripture. By 1637, the theocratic colony's authorities viewed Hutchinson a troublemaker, and she was

called before the General Court on vague charges of conduct "unfitting" for her sex (public preaching), divisive opinions and dishonoring (male) ministers. In the course of her able self-defense, based in scriptural exegesis, she also admitted to a sense of authority derived from personal religious experience of the Holy Spirit. The authorities seized on this as evidence of demonic influence and she was expelled from Massachusetts colony.

In the 19th century, Angelina (1805-1879) and Sarah (1792-1873) Grimke argued on Biblical grounds that God saw both the enslavement of African Americans and the bondage of women as sinful. Born into a slave-holding Episcopalian family in South Carolina, the sisters became abolitionists and toured New York speaking to women about slavery. They maintained that slavery was both contrary to the will of God and unconstitutional. In Boston they spoke to "mixed" audiences (men and women), which at the time was a highly controversial act and was met with social condemnation. After about five years of struggling for their causes, they retired from public life. Their work strongly influenced the view of women's bondage as a moral issue by linking it to the evil of slavery, and inspired women to press for alternative interpretations of scripture.

In 1848 the first convention for women's rights met in Seneca Falls, New York. Organized by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, (1815-1902), a Presbyterian, and Lucretia Mott (1793-1880), a Quaker, — who had met as volunteers in the anti-slavery effort — the meeting constructed a comprehensive platform for the emancipation of women. Many of the women who became active in the movement for women's rights had been abolitionists. The initially broad spectrum of concerns of this early women's movement narrowed to the single issue of voting rights for women, which was not ratified by the U.S. Congress until 1920.

Stanton had clearly perceived the role of religion in the systematic oppression of women and argued that scripture, as a foundational text for authority in Western culture, had been used as a tool to control, denigrate and exploit women. Therefore the issue of Biblical authority must be addressed by all women who seek for justice for their sex; scripture must be re-interpreted to support the emancipation of women rather than their oppression. She gathered a group of scholars and writers and together they wrote *The Women's*

Bible, published in two parts, 1896-1898. Focused on passages pertaining to women, the commentary criticizes the explicit degradation of women in passages of the Bible and offers alternative, women-affirming readings from Bible texts for lectionary use, as well as alternative interpretations of key verses. Later in life, Stanton came to believe that the Bible, regardless of exegetical reform, can never be used to support the full emancipation of women, and she explored alternative religious systems.

Once the vote for women was secured after 80 years of struggle, the women's movement appears to have gone underground for about 40 years, surfacing again after World War II as the Women's Liberation Movement in the 1960s. Women's religious liberation was again part of a broader movement for civil rights, closely linked with the demand for racial integration, suffrage for draftees, and affirmative action for minorities in the university and marketplace. As more women gained admission to higher education from which they had been excluded, women began to have an impact on the subjects they studied, such as history, literature, psychology, theology and ministry. As their education made them aware of the history of exclusion of women from history, women began to search for their lost or suppressed tradition and to change the contents and methodology of the subjects they researched.

Feminist theology at the university level addresses sexism within the praxis of the church and advances through three areas of activity: critique of Christian history and doctrine in the light of systematic political and religious oppression of women; recovery of lost, buried or denigrated women's spiritual and religious contributions; and new exegesis of scripture and constructive theology that includes women's experience.

In 1960, Valerie Saiving published an analysis of the church's male-biased understanding of sin that would prove to be a landmark text that illuminates the faultline in the bedrock where the moral experience of women can be clearly distinguished from that of men.

For the temptations of women as women are not the same as the temptations of man as man, and the specifically feminine forms of sin — "feminine" not because they are incapable of sinning in other ways, but because they are outgrowths of the basic [culturally conditioned] feminine character structure — have a quality which

can never be encompassed by such terms as "pride" and "will-to-power." They are better suggested by such items as triviality, distractibility, and diffusiveness; lack of an organizing center or focus; dependence on others for one's own self-definition; tolerance at the expense of standards of excellence; inability to respect the boundaries of privacy; sentimentality, gossipy sociability, and mistrust of reason — in short, underdevelopment or negation of the self.²

Saiving correlated the nature of salvation to the nature of sin; that Christian salvation, much like Western medicine, has been formulated exclusively with regard to a normative male anthropology and therefore is inappropriate for women. She argued that the yardstick of sin that measures pride and abuse of power is irrelevant to the situation of women who have rarely been in any position to sin through the exercise of power. Feminist Christian theology is therefore challenged to construct and correlate an anthropology and soteriology appropriate for women.

In 1968, two books were published that establish the beginning of Feminist theology proper: a critique of male theological denigration of women in *Subordination and Equivalence: The Nature and Role of Women in Augustine and Thomas Aquinas*, by Kari Borreson,³ and *The Church and the Second Sex*, by Mary Daly,⁴ a history of gender bias in the church. They expose an androcentric and misogynist church that has defined females as inferior or abnormal humans: who are more responsible for human evil than males, who cannot represent Christ and cannot be ordained to priesthood and other leadership roles, and who should be subjugated to males.

In the 1980s, women who had been educated during the post-war cultural upheavals and deconstruction of traditional authorities began to publish the results of Feminist theological research and reconstruction. As the Grimke sisters and Stanton had foreseen, the emancipation of women includes critical study of scripture. Revisionist hermeneutic of the Gospels is developed in *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*, by Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza,⁵ and of the Hebrew Bible in *Texts of Terror*, by Phyllis Trible.⁶ The late 20th century exploration of language itself as the ordering force of mind and society has been addressed by Rosemary Radford Reuther in *Sexism and God-talk: Toward a Feminist Theology*,⁷ and by Sally McFague in *Metaphorical*

*Theology*⁸ and *Models of God*.⁹ Reuther and McFague have written comprehensively on the history of language about God and proposed constructive changes in liturgy and discourse meant to correct sexist and misogynist theology and worship. Mary Daly has led a radical Feminist contingent through a rejection of the historical church as inherently damaging to women, to a separatist position of creative development of religion and religious language specifically for women in *Gyn-Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism*¹⁰ and *Pure Lust: Elemental Feminist Philosophy*.¹¹

One of the decisions Christian Feminists face is whether to stay in the church and work for change, or to cut their losses and start over again on the outside. The soteriological issue at the bottom of this question is whether or not the Incarnation of Christ can be salvific for women. The question: "Can a male god save females?" stems from a logical analysis of statements by the church about the anthropology of males and females; the question did not arise from hostile feelings of females towards a male Christ. The problem can be most clearly seen through the current conflict over ordination in the Roman Catholic church.¹²

The church states that females cannot be ordained to the priesthood because women cannot fully image Christ, who was a man. Now if it is true that a woman's nature cannot take on the image of Christ, then there are two human natures, male and female, and the third person of the Trinity, at the Incarnation, assumed only the nature of the male. This means that only males are saved by the Incarnation, whether that salvation occurs by substitutionary atonement, divinization, or any other mechanism. If only males are saved by the Incarnation, then there is no reason for women to expect salvation from faith in Christ or membership in the Christian church, and they had better seek salvation in some other quarter. If, on the other hand, women are truly saved by the Incarnation, then female human nature is not substantially different from male human nature, which contradicts the reason given by the Roman Catholic church to exclude them from ordination, and makes it look as if the preference of ordination is based on an individual's genitalia. Or, if females are imperfect or defective males, and only by imitation of Christ can they become salvageable, and if the perfect imaging of Christ is to be located in the ordination to priesthood, and if the

church is a salvific body for all human beings, then the church is obligated to ordain all females, so that they may become as fully male and "like Christ" as is possible by means of their priesthood, and thereby be saved. If the church refuses to save its females in this way, then perhaps those females are right to look outside the church for their salvation.

Many Feminist theologians do not reject Jesus, indeed, many view him as prototypically feminist in his relations with women as revealed in the gospels, and like Fiorenza and Reuther, seek to draw this exegesis into prominence. What Feminists most often question about soteriological theories is the anthropology of original sin and the crucifixion of Jesus as the mechanism of salvation. Tribble's reinterpretation of the Genesis text reveals a plurality of positions within the text itself including self-critical material which supports Feminist exegesis. Some Feminist theologians accept Chalcedonian Christology, but usually from a Liberation perspective that it is the whole life — birth, ministry, death and resurrection — of Jesus that reveals the solidarity of God with those who are oppressed. At another pole, radical Feminists such as Mary Daly believe that the entire project of the church is so foundationally and pervasively informed by oppressive patriarchal presumption that none of its structures can be rendered salvific for women; the church is irredeemable. She calls for creative construction of a religion specifically salvific for women.

I write this study from the position that Christian doctrine is a human tradition of language about an understanding of God that can sustain Feminist critique.

Atonement Theory as Ideology

In their theological work, women do not usually base their reasoning primarily in the tradition of speculative metaphysical arguments since it is doubtful that a non-patriarchal, feminist theory of salvation could be determined from patriarchal sources. Feminist critique is necessarily based on experience and contemporary psychological and social theory because traditional sources of authority failed to include the experience of women. Feminist ministers and theologians who reject the idea that Jesus Christ placated the wrath of God and paid for human sin by his suffering

and death during the crucifixion do so most often on the basis that, regardless of its logical or speculative credibility or refutation, in day-to-day life the Atonement theory functions as an ideology to justify the abuse of women.

The term "ideology" was first used by an Enlightenment philosopher who wanted to separate speculative claims about reality from experiential ones. In the 19th century, the term was used by Marx and Engels in their critique of capitalistic systems.

The word ideology was coined in 1796 by the French philosopher Antoine Destutt de Tracy (1754-1836). It described a new discipline he created whose goal was to study ideas and to help people analyze their own ideas. Destutt's intent was to sort out ideas that were based on experience and were therefore valid from those that had no basis in experience and were consequently groundless. . . [for Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels] an ideology represented the expression of the ideas of the economically dominant class in a society. Ideas do not express realities so much as the values of the people who control society. They are false in that they claim truth and universality even though they are rooted in historically based economic relationships. . . ¹³

Engels and Marx located the root of power in economic relationships. Christian Feminist critique of Atonement theory employs the methodology of Destutt and Marx, but locates the root of power in religious ideas about the nature of ultimate reality. Religious doctrines are used to make their reflection in political and intimate relationships appear to be manifestations of God's plan for creation. The speculative religious doctrine of the Atonement theory functions as a ideological validation for abusive relationships. A proof of this statement can be located in women's experience.

The transmutation of religious doctrine into political ideology is concomitant to the transmutation of metaphor into dogma; when metaphoric estimations of the limitless nature and activity of God were transmuted into rules and regulations for limiting human behavior, the nature of the regulators became imputed to the nature of God. When metaphor loses its transcendent horizon and instead is taken literally, the literal version of the metaphor loses its former associative, suggestive, ambiguous quality and instead becomes a fixed statement that cannot be challenged. Any doctrine about God or

ultimate truth can quickly become an ideology upon the substitution of human claims to power in place of its divine and transcendent horizon. The forensic salvation metaphors of the patristic age are examples.

The legal metaphor developed in patristic accounts of the atonement, making the merciful Son plead to the just Father, eventually offering himself as a sacrifice to appease paternal wrath and to pay the penalty for man's sin, the ransom owed to the devil for otherwise lost souls, paints a picture which seems excessively harsh and legalistic to most modern believers. The 'moral stop-card' which should have prevented this metaphor from being taken too literally was played too late in the development of this doctrine.¹⁴

By taking Anselm's description of the relations between Father and Son literally, the doctrine of creation/fall/redemption-by-substitutionary-Atonement became a mirror of validation for violently dysfunctional patriarchal families, including the patriarchal "family" of the Church. Christian feminist critique of Atonement theory is a long overdue "moral stop-card" to the transposition of the passion narratives of Christ into the theory that God the Father required the crucifixion of the Son in order to not destroy human beings, and that suffering in itself is salvific. According to many contemporary Feminist theologians, Atonement theory is not only "harsh and legalistic," it is downright perverse and sadistic.

Atonement theory has shifted from being an explanation of the way God justifies sinners so that they may enter into eternal divine fellowship, and instead has become an ideology of abusive patriarchal power which is used by males to justify exploitive and sadistic treatment of women and render them powerless to resist it. The way this is understood by women is not as a political or economic principle, but as a system of values that structures their intimate relationships, which Rebecca Parker has called "Suffering Love."

Critique from Intimate Experience:

Five Atonement Messages That Victimize Women

Rebecca Parker, ordained United Methodist minister and theologian, delivered her talk on Atonement theory at the Graduate Theological Union in January, 1991.¹⁵ The following is a condensation of her main points.

There are five messages from the religious community that keep

women in positions of victimization, believing that they are supposed to love their oppressors:

- 1) Love suffers;
- 2) Silent obedience is virtuous;
- 3) Suffering love is redemptive;
- 4) God is close to those who suffer; and
- 5) The oppressor who causes suffering is Holy.

1. Love suffers. Suffering love is the highest form of love. To be a real Christian, a woman must be willing to love her oppressor, no matter what that oppressor does to her. Like Jesus, this message says, she must love her enemy unto death — she must never leave, never give up, never stop loving. This message functions to preserve the oppressor and to guarantee the abusive situation will not change.

2. Silent obedience is virtuous. Rebellion against sovereign authority is what constitutes original sin. Eve's sin against God was disobedience. Therefore, the opposite of disobedience is compliance, and perfect compliance is silent, like Jesus before his accusers. To pay for the sin of Eve, women are to bow their heads in perfect obedience and silently endure the cross of their oppression.

3. Suffering redeems. The substitutionary theory of Atonement can be briefly stated thus: Human disobedience results in humans needing to be punished. To preserve perfect justice, God must punish. But God substitutes God's own son, and that son bears in his body the punishment that all of us deserve. By accepting this punishment, Jesus saves us from having to be punished eternally. Women are told to believe that by accepting suffering, like Jesus, they will transform life for someone else. And conversely, if they do not accept suffering, they will be the cause of severe suffering for someone else, and deserve to be punished in turn.

4. God is close to us when we suffer. The revelation of God's full identification with humans in their suffering can be a great consolation for sufferers. But so often it functions also to keep women uncritically stuck in a suffering role, and this can contribute to injustice. Women must believe that God is as close to them in their struggle for justice as God is close to them in their suffering.

5. The oppressor is holy. In all of these messages, somehow the oppressor is or becomes holy, and the sanctification of the oppressor is God's plan. God's plan for Jesus was that he must suffer to satisfy the damaged honor of God. This casts God in the role of an abusive parent who says things like: "This hurts me more than it hurts you," and "It hurts me to have to punish you like this — but you have forced me to punish you." God the father who demands the torture of his son is an image that is used to justify the violence of child abuse, wife battering and war. When punishment is equated with holy justice and the will of God, then those who are suffering are seen as those who deserve to be punished. In this equation, the person who is causing the suffering is equated with the just and holy father God who righteously demands this suffering. In this system, those who are suffering must therefore be guilty, and those who are able to oppress must therefore be righteous.

Blaming the victim. Parker's lecture on how the Atonement theory has played out in the intimate lives of women exposes the psychological and emotional nexus of the function of an ideology: it gets the people it is used against to cooperate in their subjection. Atonement theory persists against a background assumption that those who are suffering deserve it in some way and ought to accept it as God's will.

Suffering saves someone from the rage of a male, and an enraged male has a right to inflict suffering by demanding it as a sort of payment or tribute due to the act of being enraged: "I am enraged, and it is your fault and you should do something to placate me; therefore you must accept my infliction of pain upon you without protest because it is due to me, it is my right." Placation of his rage through submission of another to his infliction of suffering can be legitimately demanded by an enraged male of any other person, but he is most likely to be able to get it from women, children, slaves or other persons over whom he has power. The legitimacy of this demand is mirrored by the Atonement theory of the Father's rage over human sin and subsequent demand for placation from an innocent Son. The religious doctrine functions as an ideology, a metaphysical validation for what an enraged male is personally inclined to do.

When suffering becomes valuable in itself, it can also become a way to absolve those who inflict the suffering, or even to view them as participating in the formation of the goodness of suffering. When suffering becomes holier than justice, the pursuit of justice loses sacred sanction and can be seen as willful and selfish disruption of the sacred order of the cosmos and society, which then must include suffering. Paradoxically, sometimes a complete reversal occurs, where the goodness of the victim has been transferred to the perpetrator, and the badness of the perpetrator has been transferred to the victim for selfishly causing the entire situation — this is called: “blaming the victim.” The victim is forced, first to willingly accept the abuse itself, and second to become the “savior” of the abuser.

Critique from Systematic Theology

Christian Feminist rejection of Atonement theory on a systematically theological base is generally focused on three points:

1) Original sin; that implicit in Christian hermeneutic of the Genesis 1-3 story of the “Fall” of Adam and Eve is the characterization of God as a perverse male creator who severely punishes his creatures for doing something he doesn’t like even though he created them to be capable of doing it in the first place,

2) A conflicted Trinity; Trinitarian relations within the Godhead are described as a situation of “child abuse” since the Father demands that the innocent Son be tortured and killed to placate the Father’s rage over the misbehavior of the human beings the Son loves, and

3) Suffering saves; the masochistic and sadistic notion that passive submission to suffering in itself is pleasing to God and can purchase salvation.

Carter Heyward: Relational Salvation. The theology of mutual relation proposed by Feminist theologian and Episcopalian priest Carter Heyward is based on the life and ministry of Jesus. She accepts the postmodern formulation of ultimate reality as relationally constituted. She believes the ministry of Christ revealed the divine power of relation latent in all human relations. In relation to others Jesus had the power to bring about an immediate redefinition of reality, wherein human beings could find their own power and possibility for loving and just relation. “The rejection and crucifixion

of Jesus signaled the extent to which human beings will go to avoid our own relational possibilities." ¹⁶ Jesus died because he took love, justice and right relation seriously, as matters of life and death. Heyward asks her readers to "re-image" traditional metaphors used to describe the work of Jesus and the meaning of his suffering and death.

Re-image the ransom: Jesus' death releases his friends to live, not because his death is good, but rather because in his refusal to release or ransom himself from death, those who have known Jesus realize the dead-seriousness of what he was doing among them.

Re-image a Jesus who does not overcome death: There is nothing unreal or penultimate about the death of Jesus. His is an unnecessary, violent death, as are all unjust deaths. It is a final death, as are all deaths. There is nothing before, during or after Jesus' death that removes the sting of its injustice, making it a blessing or cause for great thanksgiving. Whatever the resurrection may be taken to mean, in no way does it justify, much less nullify, the injustice of Jesus' death on the cross. Any theology which is promulgated on an assumption that followers of Jesus, Christians, must welcome pain and death as a sign of faith is constructed upon a faulty hermeneutic of what Jesus was doing and of why he died. This theological masochism is completely devoid of passion. The notion of welcoming, or submitting oneself gladly to, injustice flies in the face of Jesus' own refusal to make concession to unjust relation. ¹⁷

Heyward rejects the resurrection and any metaphysical or speculative system as a basis for understanding the life and death of Jesus. "... Christian faith does not rest on the fact of Jesus' physical resurrection. Christian faith is a functional, ethical way of acting in history, not a metaphysical or speculative system. As such, Christian faith cannot rest upon the so-called 'supernatural.' "¹⁸ Heyward's relational and ethical platform contradicts Atonement theory's anthropological assumption of original sin, and her rejection of any redemptive valuation of suffering rejects the spirituality of "suffering saves." Her doctrine of God is that of a creator who has made and is making creatures capable of realizing the divine power of loving relation, and works in all people creating a just and loving universe.

Brock and Reuther: Reject Passivity of Atonement Theory.

Rita Nakashima Brock's critique of Atonement theory points out its dependency on original sin and its relation to power, passivity, and responsibility.

Joern: I want to ask you about atonement. You all seem far away from the idea of Jesus' death saving us from sin, but for many people in our churches, substitutionary atonement is the norm. They do talk about savior and heaven and the hope for eternal security. What do you have to say about all of that?

Brock: There are a whole series of assumptions built into substitutionary atonement that are highly problematic. A starting assumption is Augustine's doctrine of original sin. This essentialist [Realist] thinking about human nature is, I think, partly a mechanism of control. If I can make everybody wrong, and I can give you the answer, then you have to follow what I tell you. . . . Another problematic assumption is that you are so bad that you can't save yourself. It takes personal responsibility for behavior out of people's hands and turns it over to some other power that commands you.

Joern: We use that language about "letting go and letting God."

Brock: I think this sense of helplessness keeps us fundamentally in a victimized state. It's telling people that you don't have a right to protest when terrible things happen to you. It short-circuits the legitimate expression of tragedy and grief that is fundamental to our psychological health. We ought to be outraged that the Roman Empire crucified Jesus, not grateful, not happy that he died for us, but outraged at this travesty of justice. Also, traditional atonement doesn't work universally. For example, Delores Williams got into trouble [ref: the 1993 Re-Imagining Conference] for saying we didn't need a doctrine of atonement. She was speaking from the experience of African-American women for whom surrogacy has no redemptive value, period. They were made to be surrogates, and they don't think anybody should have to be surrogates. Then Kwok Pui-Lan said that in the Chinese culture, they believe everyone is good enough, and they'll follow a moral example if you give them a good one. So substitutionary atonement doesn't make sense in Chinese culture.¹⁹

Brock criticizes Atonement theory, noting that by positing human beings as too evil to overcome evil, and thereby casting salvation as rescue from an outside source, it reinforces ethical passivity, rendering helplessness holier than responsibility.

In her book on the cultural crucible of renewed contemporary Christology, Rosemary Radford Ruether seems to agree with Brock about the ethically debilitating effect of Atonement theory and rejects it on the basis that it has been used primarily to instill a sense of guilt and worthlessness in people so that they are easier to dominate.

There is no neutral theology, any more than there is a neutral sociology or psychology. Theology is either on the side of all by being on the side of the poor, or else it is on the side of oppressors by using theology as a tool of alienation and oppression. . . .

The meaning of the cross, of redemptive suffering, also appears in a different light for those who suffer and are killed as part of the struggle for justice. Too often Christians have treated the sufferings of Christ as some kind of cosmic legal transaction with God to pay for the sins of humanity, as though anyone's sufferings and death could actually 'pay for' others' sins! Christ's cross is used to inculcate a sense of masochistic guilt, unworthiness and passivity in Christians. To accept and endure evil is regarded as redemptive. Liberation Christians say that God does not desire anyone's sufferings, least of all Jesus,' any more than God desires or blesses poverty. Suffering, death and poverty are evils. God comes not to sanctify, but to deliver us from these evils. Solidarity with the poor and with those who suffer does not mean justifying these evils, but struggling to overcome them.²⁰

Reuther goes on to state that when people resist oppression, some of them will suffer and die during their struggle, but the deaths are not redemptive; rather it is the presence of struggle that awakens hope for change. The memory of suffering endured in hope for justice and liberation inspires the strugglers to renew the work of liberation. "This is the real meaning of redemptive suffering, of Jesus and of Christians, not passive or masochistic self-sacrifice."²¹ She dismisses the idea of payment-for-sin as fantastic.

Brown and Parker: Women Cannot Derive a Salvation Theory from the Crucifixion. Joanne Carlson Brown and Rebecca Parker state that within the scheme of the Atonement theory, women have been assigned the role of the "suffering servant," the metaphor of the abused one who will save her abusers from their own choice for evil. They state that Atonement theory dictates to women that they should be more concerned about the salvation of their abusers than they should be about preserving their own lives. They also criticize its conflation and confusion with the moral exemplar theory:

The problem with this theology is that it asks people to suffer for the sake of helping evildoers see their evil ways. It puts concern for the evildoer ahead of concern for the victim of evil. It makes victims the servants of the evildoer's salvation.²²

Brown and Parker expose and explain the theological underpinnings of the syndrome in which so many women appear to cooperate with their abusers.

Christianity has been a primary—in many women's lives the primary—force in shaping our acceptance of abuse. The central image of Christ on the cross as the savior of the world communicates the message that suffering is redemptive. If the best person who ever lived gave his life for others, then, to be of value we should likewise sacrifice ourselves. Any sense that we have a right to care for our own needs is in conflict with being a faithful follower of Jesus. Our suffering for others will save the world. The message is complicated further by the theology that says Christ suffered in obedience to his Father's will. Divine child abuse is paraded as salvific and the child who suffers "without ever raising a voice" is lauded as the hope of the world. Those whose lives have been deeply shaped by the Christian tradition feel that self-sacrifice and obedience are not only virtues but the definition of a faithful identity. The promise of resurrection persuades us to endure pain, humiliation, and violation of our sacred rights to self-determination, wholeness and freedom.²³

They focus on Atonement theory as the lock that secures the chain of abuse around the necks of women, in spite of all the Liberal and Liberation theologizing of the past century.

Despite all the correctives taught by liberation theology on how to interpret suffering, this Christian theology with atonement at the center still encourages martyrdom and victimization. It pervades our society. Our internalization of this theology traps us in an almost unbreakable cycle of abuse. Our continuing presence in the church is a sign of the depth of our oppression.²⁴

Brown and Parker conclude that there is no hope for a theology of salvation for women to be derived from any interpretation of the suffering and death of Jesus during his crucifixion. No one was saved by the death of Jesus. The injustice and travesty of his death is not changed by the idea of a resurrection. The teaching and the courage of Jesus is an example of the faithfulness to ethical integrity and justice with which women should greet the task of Feminist liberation.

Other Views of the Passion of Christ from Contemporary Women

In the excerpt from Heim's piece on backlash to the Re-imagining Conference cited in the introduction to this study (pages 1-2), he asks the question whether people who take comfort and encouragement from contemplation of the passion of Christ are worshipping the same God as Feminists who reject Atonement theory and the notion that suffering is salvific. The answer to the question probably can be found through an examination of the context of the person who is rejecting or appropriating the gospel story of the crucifixion of Christ. What is being rejected — the person of Jesus as he can be known in the gospels and the liberating salvation of God for women as revealed in Christ, or the acquiescence of a woman to her own oppression demanded through reference to the "obedience" of Christ to the will of God that he suffer and die? In the last part of this chapter, I present some examples of women's appropriation of the passion story that are different from the Feminist critique presented above, but in my opinion they do not contradict that critique.

Rejection of Atonement theory is sometimes construed as rejection of the centrality of Christ's passion to salvific experience and theory, or as a rejection of Jesus as the "savior" altogether. In fact, many Feminists who reject Atonement theory, perhaps because they see it as the only and entire theory of what it means to be "the savior," do reduce the ontological status of Christ, from the once-only Incarnation of the third person of the Trinity, to that of inspired, but only human, prophet or moral exemplar. Women who believe that the incarnate divinity of Jesus has direct bearing on his status as a savior seek to establish a religious identity distinct from that of what has become perceived to be the mainstream Feminist position. In the United States, the sharpest counter-critique of Feminist Christological reduction has been voiced by African-American women from within the African-American Liberation tradition.

African-American Womanists: On the Crucifixion. African American scholar and theologian Jacquelyn Grant writes about the difference between the oppressive "white" interpretation of Christ, used in the construction of ideologies used to oppress female and non-white persons, and the experience of living relationship with an

affirming and liberating Jesus, out of which African American women construct their "Womanist" soteriology.

Chief among these [experiences] however, was the belief in Jesus as the divine co-sufferer, who empowers them in situations of oppression. For Christian Black women in the past, Jesus was their central frame of reference. They identified with Jesus because they believed that Jesus identified with them. As Jesus was persecuted and made to suffer undeservedly, so were they. His suffering culminated in the crucifixion. Their crucifixion included rape, and babies being sold. But Jesus' suffering was not the suffering of a mere human, for Jesus was understood to be God incarnate. . . . Black women's affirmation of Jesus as God meant that White people were not God.²⁵

The suffering of Jesus does not change the disposition of God in a transcendent realm of abstract justice where the honor or justice of God is being challenged and preserved, but rather the work of the crucifixion incontrovertibly reveals God's placement of the second person of the Trinity firmly among the poor and oppressed of color and not on the side of the white oppressors. Many Womanist theologians do not frame the dialectic of salvation in terms of male domination and female subjugation, but in terms of white domination and non-white subjugation. Therefore, the maleness of God, or the divinity of the male, is not in itself a primary concern to be resolved by the reduction of divinity, but rather, the divinity of Christ proves the preference of God for those who are subjugated, who are female and male.²⁶

An Example of Contemporary Appropriation of Crucifixion Imagery. Identification with the suffering of Christ is not universally construed as masochistic by women. This theological reflection on personal experience by artist Ann Stamm Merrell is an example of contemporary experiential appropriation of the symbols of the suffering of the crucifixion and the salvific power of the blood of Christ.

In May of 1993 I was diagnosed with breast cancer. Part of my treatment consisted of chemotherapy, and one of the drugs used was a red liquid called Adriamycin. This Adriamycin being injected into my veins was an extremely powerful and extremely caustic agent coursing through my body. Its potency and toxic nature, designed so to eradicate as many cancer cells as possible, in order to save or prolong my life, also caused me considerable trauma and suffering.

One Sunday during the course of this ordeal, I sat in church and took communion; and, in a moment of clarity, the similarities — the physical characteristics, the mechanism of healing, the potency, the purpose — between the chemotherapy agent Adriamycin and the blood of Christ became apparent to me. I began to picture the blood as a healing, cleansing agent, providing its benefits — in an almost Old Testament way — via fire and the sword, a caustic agent that flowed through me, destroying all evil/cancer in my mental, emotional, spiritual and physical being. And since Christ had suffered to shed his blood, it was not surprising that I might suffer to receive its benefits.²⁷

Merrell's appropriation of the symbol of the blood of Christ and scourging and healing metaphors from the Hebrew Bible was experienced by her as an empowering act of faith during her struggle to overcome a serious illness. Inspired, she later incorporated them into her creative work as an artist. In this example, the suffering endured is not the result of unjust political or personal oppression, but is rather the universal human suffering due to physical sickness. Heim mentions the meaning of the crucifix in the sickroom; and here is an instance of its meaning to a woman in that context.

Crucifixion Soteriology: Oppression or Liberation?

Assessing these materials, it appears that how the suffering and death of Christ is appropriated determines whether the passion story of Jesus is oppressive or liberating, and consequently, whether it is accepted in some form or rejected out of hand. If an inquirer wishes to determine what exactly women are rejecting when they say they are rejecting "the Atonement," it is helpful to examine the context within which the rejection arises.

When the suffering of Christ is used by a dominator who seeks to leverage an agenda of voluntary subjection to the dominator's will, then it operates as an ideology to empower oppression. But when identification with the suffering of Christ is used by enslaved or abused people as entitlement to resist oppression, or by the sick as ability to endure the struggle of healing, then it can operate as a symbol of God's empowering preference for the sufferer.

Therefore we could say that there is a transformative use of the contents of the Crucifixion narrative and a self-justifying use of those

same contents. The same contents can be used to justify contradictory positions. Abusive pastoral use of the theory of Christ's suffering obfuscates the oppression of women and reinforces their acceptance of it. Womanist use of the image of Christ's suffering reinforces and empowers African American resistance to racism. Christological exclusivity can be used to make people afraid of leaving or contradicting the church, but it can also make people feel secure in the preference of Christ when they are threatened by religious and secular authorities. The suffering of Christ can be a sign of God's solidarity with those who suffer. This can keep them passively suffering, while comforted just enough to keep on surviving and working on the plantation or in the factory or at home, or, it can work as a reminder to them that God has a preferential option for those who suffer oppression and will support them in their demand for change.

A Survivor of Ritual Abuse Re-Appropriates the Crucifixion.

I will end this chapter with excerpts from a story of re-appropriation of the suffering and death of Jesus by a woman who was severely abused as a child and whose abusers had clearly appropriated the crucifixion narrative as a script for a sadistic ritual.

One night when I was six or seven, my step grandmother and step grandfather got me out of bed in the middle of the night and took me to a forested area near Willis, Texas. There was a group of adults in this clearing surrounded by trees with a campfire going. I was stripped naked and, after an opening ritual which involved sticking me with pins, I was laid on a cross. I was tied to the cross with ropes that were itchy and tore my skin at the wrist, shoulders and ankles. The cross was pulled upright and held in place with ropes tied to trees. Then they acted out a drama they said would make me more like Jesus. This meant they acted out their version of the crucifixion of Jesus, torturing me.

From my personal experience, having survived this horror, I am here to tell you that there is nothing, absolutely nothing, salvific in being hung on a cross naked; and being humiliated and tortured by sadistic strangers. There is no saving grace in such a horrid act. Abuse is abuse is abuse. It is horror. It certainly does not reflect God's will for me, or for Jesus, or for the child who will be hung on a cross tonight and tortured by some cult of perpetrators calling themselves Christians and acting out what the churches teach: torture is salvific.²⁸

Boothman recognizes the links between her own experience of ritual abuse and the substitutionary Atonement theory of salvation by justification. She anticipates attempts to minimize the torture and sadism she has described as merely an unusual case of perversion of an otherwise acceptable doctrine. She argues that Atonement theory itself states that God is pleased by torture and suffering; she declares that this doctrine was developed and disseminated to justify the sadistic praxis of the church.

And lest we want to rationalize this experience as a perversion of these theologies, we only need to look briefly into church history. The reality of atonement theologies is they have always been understood as teaching torture as salvific. . . . [women] were taught by the church that ritualized torture was "good for the soul." Many believed that this ritual abuse was necessary for their salvation.

Some would say that Jesus was to be the ultimate sacrifice to God so no other sacrifices would be necessary. Therefore, all this represents perversions of atonement theology. How horrid: God will and/or needs the execution of an innocent man to relate to you and me. So much for a just God.

. . . The Christian churches are perpetrators, and co-conspirators with perpetrators, of severe abuse of children, women, and men who are seen as womanly. They have been for almost 2,000 years. They have developed doctrines that portray God as a horrid perpetrator to justify their own sadism.²⁹

Yet Boothman goes on to say that the historical Jesus has become profoundly important to her; she considers him to be her friend and the friend of all people who challenge oppressive institutions.

The threats against our lives are from the same systems that executed my friend so long ago. The radical freedom of Jesus of Nazareth is as unacceptable and threatening to authority today, both religious and political, as it was then.³⁰

Boothman has re-appropriated the "historical Jesus" (rather than the dogmatic Jesus of Atonement theory, or the cultic Jesus of her perpetrators) who stands with her against oppressive and sadistic authorities.

Summary

Feminist theology in the late 20th century in the United States grows out of the cultural validation for religious and civil dissent rooted in the toleration that resolved the religious wars of the Reformation period and is foundational to United States polity as written into its constitution. In the 19th century, the emancipation and suffrage of women was allied with the movement to abolish slavery, and its leaders insisted that re-interpretation of the Bible and reform of religion were necessary to the cause of women's rights. The Women's Liberation movement of the 1960s came to the foreground of politics within a context of social dissent and cultural upheaval. Large numbers of women entered formerly male-only fields of education and employment, and began to criticize and to change the methodology and conclusions of historical study and constructive social sciences. They also entered the fields of ministry and theology and by the 1980s a distinct body of Feminist theological work had been built up by Feminist scholars teaching and writing in seminaries resident to major universities.

One of the consistent characteristics of Feminist theological enterprise is the critique of the Atonement theory on the basis that it has been used ideologically to oppress women and to convince them to accept abuse and participate in the mechanism of their oppression. Biblical exegetes such as Phyllis Trible and Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza have re-interpreted key texts such as the Genesis creation stories in ways that reverse or render ambiguous traditional interpretations that denigrate women. Pastoral educators Rebecca Parker and Joanne Carlson Brown have exposed the psychological and emotional mechanisms whereby the cooperation of women in their own subjugation to the abusive demands of enraged males has been secured. Systematic theologians Rosemary Radford Ruether, Carter Heyward and Rita Nakashima Brock have all dismissed "payment for sin" and "placation of God's wrath" theories of the work of Christ and have proposed constructive theologies based on liberation and relational foundations.

Whether their Christology is trinitarian or unitarian, contemporary Christian Feminists can look for salvation in solidarity with the life and teaching of Jesus, who challenged the religious hypocrisy and patriarchal power structures of his day so seriously that

he was executed for it. In thinking this way, they are in theological harmony with their era, for in the Postmodern period we have seen that salvation is understood primarily as rescue from or transformation of earthly conditions in the present life. Feminist Christians look to God for liberation from patriarchal domination and exploitation, and expect spiritual empowerment to enable the transformation of destructive social patterns into right relations between women and men in the world.

Conclusion

It is now time to answer my question: "Do you have to believe that Jesus Christ suffered and died to pay for sin to call yourself a Christian?" My answer is: "No."

In my brief historical analysis of salvation theory I have confirmed that the substitutionary Atonement theory of salvation by justification has never been defined as a doctrine of the church by an ecumenical council or conciliar body of the catholic church, that its first systematic formulation was not written until the 11th century, and that it has been accepted by many theologians but contradicted by others. Some version of "at-one-ment" has been used as a metaphor for the claims of Christian salvation in all historical periods, but substitutionary Atonement theory was a majority theory only during the medieval period. It was written to explain the Christian claim of salvation in Christ to a particular culture at a particular time, and was preserved as an ideology of the church after the passing of that culture. Substitutionary Atonement theory has never stood without sincere and able controversion. When Christian Feminist theologians and ministers contradict substitutionary Atonement theory, they join with medieval luminaries and theologians of the church such as Peter Abelard, John Duns Scotus, and Faustus Socinus, with the 19th century social gospel visionaries Albrecht Ritschl and Walter Rauschenbusch, and with Liberation theologians such as James Cone and Jon Sobrino in the contemporary period. Christian Feminists can stand solidly in what amounts to a tradition of repudiation of Atonement theory.

My second problem or question in the Introduction to this study was about what establishes or constitutes "orthodoxy." How do we

claim Christian identity and membership when there is so much disagreement among members about what constitutes Christianity?

Since it was not possible for the Mediterranean churches of Imperial Roman times to achieve perfect doctrinal consensus, how much more impossible must it be for Christians in the contemporary worldwide context to achieve it. Yet the World Council of Churches continues to convene and its membership continues to grow as it engages the plurality of Christian traditions and theologies in an ongoing conversation towards communion in faith. In the light of its efforts toward Christian unity, it can be seen that ecumenical orthodoxy cannot pretend to claim a monolithic truth about ultimate reality to which all Christians agree, but rather must locate its base for authority in a commitment to a process of community membership. Such a base would be an orthodoxy in which unity is not achieved by a collapse of controversy, nor by finding a lowest common denominator, but instead by friendliness to ambiguity and diversity.

Human community coheres around a commonly held belief system about what words and symbols mean to all the members of that community. When members disagree about what words and symbols mean, it does not necessarily signify the dissolution of that community. Argument about meaning is still community around shared meanings. Rather, a state of latent alienation exists when one appears to accept what one is told a symbol means, without truly participating in that consensus. Therefore, it is always appropriate to engage in the argument of what constitutes the system of Christian beliefs, and especially so whenever its symbols become meaningless to some of its members, since to engage openly in a sincere struggle for meaning is to be deeply engaged with the welfare of the entire community of meaning, whereas a mere pretense of shared faith is a form of alienation.

Orthodoxy, then, would be based in a commitment by those who claim membership to continue in a mutual effort to maintain the necessary construction, definition and renewal of its most meaningful symbols, and the health and relevance of this process of orthodoxy would be proved by the presence of argument.

According to this definition, since the Re-imagining Conference was an ecumenical catholic council convened at the instigation of

the World Council of Churches, as members of the universal or catholic orthodox Christian church proposed above, women were required to engage in the process of creating, defining and renewing theories of salvation that are meaningful for themselves. Christian Feminists who engaged in the ongoing process of discovery of what salvation in Jesus Christ means at the Re-imagining Conference were orthodox theologians of this church.

According to the conclusions of my historical study and following the guidelines of my proposal for determining a contemporary orthodoxy, I can see no reason why feminist Christians should not abandon Atonement theory. By renewing and developing soteriological theories and metaphors alternative to the substitutionary Atonement theory of salvation by justification, women can reject it as one of many theories of salvation and still consider themselves to be orthodox Christians.

Appendix

An Imaginary Dialogue

in Illustration of the Objective and Subjective Positions
on the "Work" of the Crucifixion.

Subjectivist: The story of Christ's suffering on the cross for love of human beings awakens an answering love in the hearts of hearers, and this love unites the hearers to God through Christ, and thereby they are saved. The death in itself accomplishes nothing.

Objectivist: But the sight of suffering itself would be powerless to evoke love if that suffering were not understood as beneficial to the hearer in a real and ultimate way. Rather, it would just be another case of senseless suffering that provokes pity or revulsion. Only salvific suffering awakens faith, and the response of faith is conditioned by the knowledge of the objective benefit of Christ's obedient suffering and death. If the death of Christ does not permanently alter the universe in some way, then the torture-death suffered by Jesus can only be arbitrary, appalling and sickening.

Subjectivist: Your argument makes Christ's death a mechanical suicide performed for a mechanical cancellation of debt and mechanical transfer of benefits. As an objective transaction, it could be accepted and believed, but it hardly provokes love, and it makes the God who requires it a sort of cold-blooded salvation broker and faith the calculation of a shrewd investor. In fact the death would be just another sign of evil in the world and not of salvation from it, if it were not seen as part of a whole life spent unto death in revelation of the loving faithfulness of God. The death is meaningful because it is a revelation of the reckless extent of God's love for human beings. When a sinner accepts this love, she or he undergoes a profound and permanent change of heart, which opens the sinner to the free grace of God's salvation.

Objectivist: To say that a sentimental response to suffering and death, especially that of a perfectly innocent and lovable person, is salvific, reduces the conviction of salvation to a matter of hysterical opinion with a sadomasochistic edge. It is a form of romanticism in which dramatic and sublime emotions merely disrupt the equilibrium of the sinner,

which places faith in Christian salvation on the level of a pagan frenzy or a state of intoxication. Faith is not an emotion.

Subjectivist: It is you who are reducing love to mere sentimentality. It is true that love is not an emotion, although it may be accompanied by emotions. Love is the donation of the self into abiding communion, a giving over of all that one has into a shared future, like the love of Mary who gave over herself and her life to the mothering of Jesus. It is the loving will of God that is revealed in the faithful life and suffering unto death of Christ that inspires an answering love in the sinner, and the beginning of a life bound up with the life of God. Then one's salvation is real and living, not "objective." The "work" of Christ is not that of a cosmic parole officer, nor of a bail bondsman or plea bargainer. Christ does not make a deal between a wrathful judge and depraved sinner, but God's love works in Christ to convert the sinner, for God already loved the sinner before the earthly advent of Christ.

Objectivist: God loves human beings, yes, but God cannot take sinners back until their sins are paid for and they are made worthy of love again. Society recognizes the truth of the universal reality of the need for justice when it does not allow its criminals to participate in the benefits of lawful society until they have paid the price for their crimes. If we let criminals get off "scott-free" then we are making the goodness of law-abiders worthless. If God were to take sinners back into communion with heaven without first demanding restitution, then where would be any reason to try to be good in life? If the cosmic rule of justice were compromised, then society would become progressively chaotic. The sacraments and preaching of the church would be rendered useless and stupid, and there would be no reason to uphold the gospel rather than some self-serving neo-pagan evil-denying groovy-feel-good sex and drug cult.

Subjectivist: You are right to insist that conversion of life should be one of the fruits of faith, but even Aquinas observed, as did the great pagan philosophers, that law and order can be derived from experience and reason, the existence of God can be thoughtfully demonstrated without benefit of revelation, and the fear of punishment can compel social reform. So there is no basis for your fears of immorality and chaos. Perhaps what you actually fear is the loss of control over the distribution of "salvation" that would flourish if the church were not the only means

of obtaining forgiveness and the remission of punishment for sin? Is this the reason for clinging to the objective theory of Christ's saving death? Is it merely the presumed punishment by God from which the churches offer salvation? As if the church were a religious mafia which could fix your moral tickets for you. For if passionate love of God and contrition for wrong doing were enough to reconcile the sinner to God, what more would the church need to be but a voluntary communion of souls eager to advance in loving communion with God?

Objectivist: "Voluntary" is precisely the weakness of your argument, for it describes a situation where God can be a "choice" in one's life, which makes you look like that sort of free-market spiritualist who views religions as so many consumer options. Your position fails to take sin, justice and God seriously. You demean the experience of radical evil that other people have endured and for which they need a vision of justice in order to have hope. You cannot make civil justice mandatory but religion voluntary. Either there is order in the universe or there is chaos. If God is unjust and disorderly, then Christians are dupes and losers to insist on justice and order. Your voluntarism of love leads to anything-goes-with-God and makes forgiveness cheap. How shall wrongdoing be wrong if it is not damnable in God's eyes? God's unmitigated punishment is due to human sin, but since it would have meant the annihilation of human beings, out of love, God sent Christ to bear the blame and punishment due to humans for sin so that we could be forgiven and live eternally. The love of Christ begins in gratitude for his suffering and death because it met the requirement of a just God for restitution in a just and orderly universe. Love requires justice and order, and therefore the church should be more concerned about the requirement for order than the rest of society.

Subjectivist: But if love only begins in gratitude, then how is it true love rather than obligation? If it is owed, then it is compelled, and compelled love is not free love, because it is extracted rather than freely given. Would any lover be satisfied with a dutiful love? Lovers want passionate, mutually surrendered love! The love of Christ for human beings was just such an unreasonable, uncalculating, passionate love-unto-death.

Objectivist: We owe God our love, love is *due* to God from his creatures. During his suffering on the cross the Son was perfectly

obedient to the Father in a state of perfect love. It is right, fitting and proper for us to love God, who is the good, powerful and perfectly just ruler of the universe. God is not an equal with whom one can claim to have a relationship between equals, not some footloose and fancy-free romantic type who seduces men and women away from their duties.

Subjectivist: The mystics use the language of lovers, the canons of the church use the language of lawyers! What we are really arguing about is the nature of love. Is love due to God as obedience, or is love inspired and received by God, gratuitously? God is free to save and free to damn; there is no power that can compel God to love or to forgive. We were made in God's image, which means that we are free to love. If we are not free to love, then how are we truly free at all, and if we are not truly free, then how can we be punished for sinning as if we were free to sin? If we are free to sin, then we are also free to love. Our freedom to love shall triumph over our freedom to sin, not because we will ever turn completely from sin, but because God prefers love, and what God prefers cannot fail. This is the revelation in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

Objectivist: You continue to display a preference for romantic fallacy. Let me point out to you that you live in a well-ordered society where the grocery trucks deliver every day and an ambulance can always get through. You expect orderly behavior from your neighbors and there are reliable means for securing it. It is easy for you to say that you believe in the freedom of love and sin, because the state protects you from the worst of human sinfulness. But if you lived in a lawless country run by guerilla factions, drug lords and labor-mongers, where famine, inflation and epidemics swept through the land without relief, where extortion, bribery and murder were the only means of social control, you might find yourself preaching the lawful order of God and the terrific punishments that await wrongdoers — and you would preach this out of love for their victims! The law and order of Western society was built on Western faith in the justice of God. The theology of the cross gives one strength for real life combat against the evil rampant in the world. If you know that justice will ultimately prevail, you will have the courage to fight sin and evil. This is the revelation of the cross of Christ.

Subjectivist: I agree with you that Christ reconciles sinners to the justice of God, but I believe that the justice of God is mercy, and that

the revelation of Christ is the mercy of God, the love of God for human begins that is willing to suffer our disobedience, sin and injustice solely for the sake of winning our hearts. The ideal of law and order of Western society is rooted in the civil administration of the Roman Empire, whose religion was a practice of the most eclectic paganism the world has ever seen. All great civilizations order themselves, and most of them have not been Christian. The good news of the cross is a promise of something greater than justice and obedience, for it says: "I love you and I will be with you always, even and especially will I remain with you when your thoughts and behavior are evil." When we truly accept this revelation of God's love, we can no longer withhold ourselves and we surrender to God, and through God's Holy Spirit and by Christ's example we are taught how to love in return. From then on, we try to be generous and good, not from fear of chaos and punishment, but to draw nearer to and become more like our lover. If one is then caught up in the evil and destruction of the world, one is not afraid, for such sin will not result in separation from the love of God.

Objectivist: It is both blasphemous and bubble-headed to think that sin will not separate sinners from God, for that is the very definition of sin itself: separation from God. Sin is indeed a breach with God, and the measures which God took to reverse the evil of human sin were costly to himself. Saying it was just a little demonstration of overblown affection ridicules and trivializes the true depth of human sin and God's strenuous commitment to the elect he intends to save. . .

. . . and so forth. The most important thing to notice about this ongoing and interminable argument is that both sides agree to focus on the crucifixion as the locus of salvation. They are like two watchdogs tied to the same pole, and as they quarrel for dominance in their dual guardianship of the value of the death of Jesus, they become inextricably tangled in each other's traces, and their range of movement over the field of approach to the gospel narrows and tightens as they both become evermore more tightly enmeshed.

Notes

Notes to Introduction

1. David Heim, "Sophia's Choice: Wisdom and Conversation," in *Christian Century*, Vol. III, No. 11, April 6, 1994, 339.
2. Delores Williams, quoted in editorial "A Converted Conference," in *Christian Century*, Vol. III, No. 5, Feb. 16, 1994, 160.
3. Susan Cyre, quoted in "Fallout Escalates Over 'Goddess' Sophia Worship, in *Christianity Today*, Vol. 38, No.4, April 14, 1994, 74.
4. Expiation and propitiation often mean the same thing: to change the disposition of God by an act of some kind such as worship, sacrifice, making amends. Expiation has a connotation of making amends for a specific misdeed, working it off or doing penance, "paying for sin" or accepting punishment. Propitiation has a broader connotation of generally seeking to placate the wrath of God, or to please God and appeal for favor and protection in the case of God's apparent indifference.
5. *The New Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Ferguson and Wright, (England and Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988), 837.
6. Martin VanElderen, *Introducing the World Council of Churches*, (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1990), 4.
7. Walker, Williston, et.al., *A History of the Christian Church*, 4th edition (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1985), 702.
8. John P. Galvin, "Jesus Christ," in *Systematic Theology: Roman Catholic Perspectives*, Vol. I, ed. Francis Schussler Fiorenza and John P. Galvin (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1991) 275.
9. *Ibid.*, 323.

Notes to Chapter One

1. J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrine*, (London: Black, 1977), 163.
2. Walker, *A History of the Christian Church*, 12-13.
3. *Ibid.*, 18.
4. Justin Martyr, "The Second Apology of Justin," in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol I, eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1896), 191.

5. The full discussion of the problem of reconciling the existence of evil with the goodness of the Creator is properly the territory of theodicy and beyond the focus of this thesis. However, the problem comes up again as part of the nucleus of contemporary discontent with Atonement theory, and I will deal with it again in chapter four below.

6. Gustaf Aulén, *Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of the Atonement*, trans. A.G. Herbert (London: S.P.C.K., 1953), 75.

7. Hastings Rashdall, *The Idea of the Atonement in Christian Theology*, (London: MacMillan and Co., Ltd., 1919), 262.

8. L.W. Grensted, *A Short History of the Doctrine of the Atonement*, (Manchester: The University Press, 1920), 42 -43.

9. *Ibid.*, 56.

10. Irenaeus of Lyon, "Against Heresies," in *Theological Anthropology*, p.24-25.

11. Clement of Alexandria, "Stromata 7.10.57," in *Alexandrian Christianity, Vol.II*, trans. John E.L.Oulton and Henry Chadwick, from the Library of Christian Classics (London: S.P.C.K., 1953), 129.

12. Rashdall, *Idea of Atonement*, 455-456.

13. Irenaeus of Lyon, "Against Heresies, III.18.1," trans. and ed. Richard A Norris, Jr., in *The Christological Controversy*, series Sources of Early Christian Thought (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 49.

14. Galvin, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. I, 276.

15. Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition, Vol. I. of The Christian Tradition, A History of the Development of Doctrine*, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 155.

16. William G. Rusch, "How the Eastern Fathers Understood What the Western Church Meant by Justification," in *Justification By Faith: Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue VII*, ed. H. George Anderson, T. Austin Murphy and Joseph A Burgess (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1985), 140-141.

17. Gregory of Nyssa, from Cat. Magn 25, quoted in Rashdall, *Idea of Atonement*, 307.

18. Athanasius, *The Incarnation of the Word of God*, trans. "A Religious of C.S.M.V.S.Th.," intro. by C.S. Lewis (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1946), 29.

19. *Ibid.*, 35.

20. Frances M. Young, *Sacrifice and the Death of Christ*, foreword by Maurice Wiles, (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1975), 10.

21. *Ibid.*, 71.

22. Van A. Harvey, *A Handbook of Theological Terms*, (New York and London: Collier Books, MacMillan Publishing Co., 1964), 33-34.

23. *Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version with Apocrypha*, (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 758-759.

24. Tertullian, "Scorpice, Antidote for the Scorpion's Sting," translated by Rev. S. Thelwall, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol III, 634.

25. *Ibid.*, 639.

26. Walker, *A History*, 52.

27. Augustine, *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, trans. R.S. Pine-Coffin, (London: Penguin Classics, 1961), 47, 50.

28. Rashdall, *Idea of Atonement*, 253.

29. John McIntyre, *The Shape of Soteriology: Studies in the Doctrine of the Death of Christ*, (Edinburgh, Scotland: T & T Clark, 1992), 57-58.

Notes to Chapter Two

1. "Justice" in medieval times is obedience to the laws of the hierarchical rulerships of church and state. It should never be confused with the prophetic "justice" of contemporary Liberation theologies, where to serve the cause of "justice" often means to contradict the oppression of marginalized persons by the powers of church and state.

2. Robert J. Schreiter, *Constructing Local Theologies*, (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1985), 89.

3. Grensted, *A Short History*, 91 ff.

4. *Ibid.*, Augustine, in *De Trinitate* xiii, II, 91.

5. Quoted in chapter one of this thesis, 11.

6. Anselm, "Cur Deus Homo," in *A Scholastic Miscellany: Anselm to Ockham*, ed. and trans. by Eugene R. Fairweather, *The Library of Christian Classics*, Ichthus Edition (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956), 140.

7. *Ibid.*, 119.

8. *Ibid.*, 152.

9. Herman-Emiel Mertens, *Not the Cross, but the Crucified: An Essay in Soteriology*, trans. and adapted by Gert Troch, from *Louvain Theological and Pastoral Monographs* (Louvain: Peeters Press, 1992), 73-74.

10. *Ibid.*, 122, 123.

11. Colin Morris, *The Discovery of the Individual, 1050-1200*, series *Church History Outlines* 5, (London, S.P.C.K., 1972), 24-25.

12. Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 98.

13. Morris, *The Discovery*, 12.

14. Mertens, *Not the Cross*, 74. See also Morris, *The Discovery*, p. 22ff.

15. Bonaventure, *Bonaventure: The Soul's Journey Into God, The Tree of Life, and The Life of St. Francis*, trans. Ewert Cousins, in series *Classics of Western Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1978), 305-306.
16. Heinrich Suso, *Henry Suso, The Exemplar, With Two German Sermons*, trans. and ed. Frank Tobin, in series *Classics of Western Spirituality* (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1989), 247-248.
17. Thomas a Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ, in Four Books*, trans. Joseph N. Tylenda, S.J. (Delaware: Michael Glazier, Inc., 1984), 100.
18. *Ibid.*, 102.
19. *Ibid.*, 105.
20. Aulén, *Christus Victor*, 113-114.
21. Peter Abailard, "Exposition on the Epistle to the Romans," *A Scholastic Miscellany*, 283.
22. The Realism of the medieval period should not be confused with 19th century "realism," as of the Realist school of painters and writers such as Courbet and Zola, which is more properly called materialism or naturalism. Realism in the medieval sense is what is nowadays usually called "essentialism."
23. Abailard, "Exposition . . .," *Scholastic Miscellany*, 284.
24. Grensted, *A Short History*, 281.
25. John Duns Scotus, trans. Mary Elizabeth Ingham in "John Duns Scotus: An Integrated Vision," in *The History of Franciscan Theology*, ed. Kenan Osborne, OFM (New York: The Franciscan Institute, 1994), 218.
26. Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition*, Vol. 4, 23.
27. *Creeds of the Churches, A Reader in Christian Doctrine from the Bible to the Present*, ed. John H. Leith, 3rd edition, (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982) 68.
28. *Ibid.*, 69.
29. *Ibid.*, 204.
30. *Ibid.*, 277.
31. Grensted, *A Short History*, 197-198.
32. *Creeds of the Churches*, 411ff.
33. *The Racovian Catechism, with Notes and Illustrations*, translated from the Latin by Thomas Rees, F.S.A., 1818, reprinted by The American Theological Library Association, (Lexington, Kentucky, 1962), 315-316.
34. Walker, et.al., *A History*, 355.

Notes to Chapter Three

1. "Postmodern" is a collective term used to denote a worldview increasingly manifest in the post-industrial civilizations of the Northern Hemisphere, characterized by distrust of metatheories. Metatheories such as Christianity, democracy, communism, Newtonian positivism, and their hierarchical values and absolutes, cosmological coherencies and traditional expression, are treated as cultural artifacts and appropriated aesthetically or ironically into unstable conglomerate structures. By "structures" I mean meaningful cultural structures such as architectural styles, narrative plots or lack of them, news media and television programming, the Internet, etc. Fragmentation of identity, plurality and de-centralization of authority, relativization of and recombination of values are some elements of the postmodern condition.

2. Friedrich Schleiermacher, *On Religion, Speeches to its Cultured Despisers*, trans. by Richard Crouter, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 102.

3. Albrecht Ritschl, "Instruction in the Christian Religion," in *Three Essays*, trans. Philip Hefner (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1972), 240.

4. F. Adolf Harnack, *What Is Christianity?*, trans. Thomas Bailey Saunders, 2nd authorized American edition, (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1901). (note characterization of Jesus, especially on pp.56-61, 118-121, 130-139, and 148-155.)

5. Walter Rauschenbusch, "The Social Gospel and the Atonement," in *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, (New York and Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), 251.

6. *Ibid.*, 243.

7a. Covenantal federalism is a kind of theology that puts the relationship of human beings to God on a contractual basis. It states the nature and extent of the rights and responsibilities of the covenantal parties. Derived in part from the Deuteronomistic writings in the Hebrew Bible, it was developed primarily by the English Puritans and J. Cocceius (1603-1669). Covenant theology objectifies the subjective experience of personal love and kinship as a set of principles of loyalty and obligation. It is thought to have undergirded the rise of the constitutional state and the polity of the confessional churches.

7b. *Ibid.*

8. I do not know whether Ritschl or Rauschenbusch read Marx, who was publishing during the time of their careers, or if they were influenced by his critique of culture. One can speculate that the social analysis of the fathers of Liberal Protestantism were as much affected by Marxian critical currents as Marx is said to have been affected by Christian communitarian utopianism.

9. C. Ray Penn, "Competing Hermeneutical Foundations and Religious Communication: Why Protestants Can't Understand Each Other," in *The Journal of Communication and Religion*, March 1988, 14.

10. *Creeds of the Churches*, 365.

11. James Barr, *Fundamentalism*, (Philadelphia: the Westminster Press, 1978), 24ff.

12. There are many kinds of conversion experiences; this exposition does not mean to describe conversion experience in general nor to state that the evangelical conversion experience here described is normative.

13. Horace Bushnell, *Christian Nurture*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1979).

14. Catherine L. Albanese, *America: Religions and Religion*, 2nd edition, (Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1992), 171.

15. *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to Truth.*, corporate authorship, in four volumes, (Los Angeles, California: Bible Institute of Los Angeles, 1917), see especially two pertinent chapters in Volume III: Chap. 5, "The Atonement," by Franklin Johnson, and Chap. 6, "At-one-ment by Propitiation," by Dyson Hague. — from Hague, p. 81: *It is evident to the impartial reader of the New Testament that the death of Christ was the object of His incarnation. His crucifixion was the main purport of His coming. While His glorious life was and is the inspiration of humanity, after all, His death was the reason of His life. His mission was mainly to die. . . . The object of the death of Christ was the forgiveness of sins.*

16 Barr, *Fundamentalism*, 16ff.

17. Albanese, *America: Religions and Religion*, 373.

18. see *Apologetics in the New Age, a Christian Critique of Pantheism*, by David Clark and Norman L. Geisler, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1990; and *Crystal Clear, Understanding and Reaching New Agers, A Small Group Discussion Guide*, by Dean C. Halverson, NavPress, Colorado Springs, Colorado, 1990.

19. J. L. Simmons (Jerry Laird), *The Emerging New Age* (Santa Fe: New Mexico, Bear, 1989) 16.

20. *Ibid.*, 14.

21. *Ibid.*, 17.

22. "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church," in *Creeds of the Church*, 465.

23 *Ibid.*, 467.

24 *Ibid.*, 469.

25 *Ibid.*

26 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Citta de Vaticano, trans. by the United States Catholic Conference, Inc. (Washington, D. C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1994), 155ff.

27. James Cone, *God of the Oppressed*, (Minneapolis: The Seabury Press, 1975), 231.
28. Ibid., 192.
29. Ibid., 193.
30. Jon Sobrino, *Christology at the Crossroads: A Latin American Approach*, trans. John Drury (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1978), 214.
31. Ibid., 215.
32. Ibid., 227.
33. "A Call to Confess and Proclaim, 57 The Whole Gospel," in *Creeds of the Churches*, 691.
34. Richard Tarnas, *The Passion of the Western Mind: Understanding the Ideas That Have Shaped Our World View*, (New York: Ballantine Books, 1991), 322.

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1. Owen Chadwick, *The Secularization of the European Mind in the 19th Century*, the Gifford Lectures for 1973-74, (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975).
2. Valerie Saiving, "The Human Situation: a Feminist View," *The Journal of Religion* 40, (April 1960, University of Chicago), 100-112.
3. Kari Borreson, *Subordination and Equivalence: The Nature and Role of Women in Augustine and Thomas Aquinas*, (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, Inc., 1981.)
4. Mary Daly, *The Church and the Second Sex*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1968, 1975.)
5. Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins*, (New York: Crossroad, 1983.)
6. Phyllis Trible, *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984.)
7. Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Sexism and God-talk: Toward a Feminist Theology*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1983.)
8. Sally Mc Fague, *Metaphorical Theology, Models of God in Religious Language*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982.)
9. Sally McFague, *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological, Nuclear Age*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987.)
10. Mary Daly, *Gyn/Ecology: The Metaethics of Radical Feminism*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1978.)
11. Mary Daly, *Pure Lust: Elemental Feminist Philosophy*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984.)

12. I am using the Roman Catholic position on ordination because its statements are explicit. I believe it has made explicit what in other churches remains implicit: that women cannot really mediate Christ or divine presence and authority as well or as fully as men. This implicit discrimination is manifest in the lack of acceptance for ordained women in primary leadership roles in churches that do ordain women, and the paucity of women in systematic theological faculties such as that of the Graduate Theological Union.

13. Herbert Kohn, *From Archeatype to Zeitgeist: Powerful Ideas for Powerful Thinking*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1992), 165-166.

14. *Theology and Literature*, ed. T.R. Wright, (Oxford and New York: B. Blackwell, 1988), 17.

15. Rebecca Parker, "A Feminist Critique of Atonement," audio recording of a talk given for The Center for Woman and Religion at the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, CWR archives, January 1991.

16. Carter Heyward, *The Redemption of God: A Theology of Mutual Relation* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, Inc., 1982), 48.

17. *Ibid.*, 57-58.

18. *Ibid.*, 58.

19. Rita Nakashima Brock, et.al., "Can We Talk?" in *Re-Imagining: Quarterly Newsletter of the Re-Imagining Community*, Nov. 1994, No. 1, 5.

20. Rosemary Radford Reuther, *To Change the World* (New York: Crossroad, 1981), 27-28.

21. *Ibid.*

22. Joanne Carlson Brown and Rebecca Parker, "For God So Loved the World?" in *Christianity, Patriarchy, and Abuse: A Feminist Critique*, (Cleveland, Ohio: The Pilgrim Press, 1989), 20.

23. *Ibid.*, 2.

24. *Ibid.*, 3.

25. Jacquelyn Grant, *White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus*, (Atlanta: Scholar's Press, 1989).

26. See also Kelly Brown Douglas, *The Black Christ*, series The Bishop Henry McNeal Turner studies in North American Black Religion, Vol. 9, (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, c1993).

27. Ann Stamm Merrell, from a leaflet distributed at Dominican School of Theology in explanation of her quilt piece, "The Blood of Christ: Adriamycin," 65" x 83", 1995.

28. Rev. Dr. Sherre L. Boothman, "Being Lesbian, Feminist Christian and a Survivor of Childhood Abuse: A Christian Clergywoman Finds Her Voice," in *CLOUTreach*, Summer 1994, Volume 3, Number 2, 2.

29. *Ibid.*, 3.

30. *Ibid.*

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